Friendſhip in Death:

IN

TWENTY LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD *to the* LIVING.

To which are added,

LETTERS

MORAL and ENTERTAINING,

In Proſe and Verſe.

In THREE PARTS.

(VOL. II.)

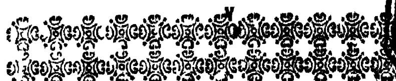
By Mrs. *ELIZABETH ROWE.*

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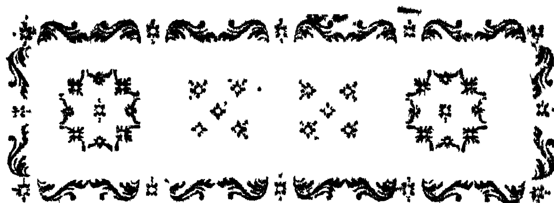
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LETTERS

Moral and Entertaining.

PART II.

LETTER I.

To Lady SOPHIA, *from a young Woman of Quality, relating the Occasion of her leaving her Father's House.*

MADAM,

WHEREVER I am, it will be a pleasure to you, I am persuaded, to know I have found a retreat, entirely to my own satisfaction: The occasion of my flight and concealment, you are partly acquainted with: I found my Father inflexible in his resolution

of marrying me to a Foreigner of great distinction, one of his own principles, a bigotted Papiſt. My Mother, you know, was a ſtrict Proteſtant, and by her marriage-articles had ſecured her own liberty, and that of educating her daughters in the ſame profeſſion: I was their only child, carefully inſtructed in thoſe ſacred Truths, which, by the aſſiſtance of Heaven, I never will renounce, but rather give up my title to all the dazzling advantages the world can tempt me with. It is for this I am a voluntary exile from my father's houſe, who, after my mother's death, intrenched on my religious liberty, reſtrained me from the public worſhip, and forbid me reading my Bible. Theſe ſeverities, with the *French* match he was treating for me, put me on the deſperate adventure of privately quitting his family, and ſecuring my freedom in ſome humble diſguiſe. No perſon on earth was privy to my deſign, but a near relation of my mother's, a perſon of ſtrict honour and piety; who encouraged me to ſacrifice every thing, rather than renounce my faith, or break my peace with Heaven and my own conſcience.

I got

I got the habit of a country girl, and, with this gentleman's aſſiſtance, was carried into one of the moſt fertile counties in *England*, 'till we came near a large farm-houſe, of which he had ſome knowledge, and there he left me to make my own fortune. I went on with cautious ſteps till I came to the entrance of a ſquare court, ſurrounded with a hedge of haw-thorn in its full bloom. Here I met the miſtreſs of the family; ſhe appeared young, and in a clean modeſt dreſs was perfectly agreeable: There was ſomething in her aſpect ſo gentle and beneficent, that I could not help being intereſted in her welfare, from the firſt moment I ſaw her.

She was then dealing out the remains of a plentiful table to a company of indigent people, who, with lifted hands and grateful hearts, implored Heaven to reward her in a thouſand bleſſings. A very pretty boy and girl, with ſparkling eyes and roſy cheeks, ſtood hanging on her apron; who, to mimick their mother, gave away all the little treaſure they had in their pockets to the beggars children; and then fell a crying, becauſe ſhe would not ſuffer them to pull off

their own ſhoes and ſtockings, to give to ſome that were bare-footed.

As ſoon as ſhe had diſmiſſed her dependants, I offered my ſervice, and told her the diſtreſſes to which I muſt be expoſed, if ſhe refuſed me. She perceived my concern was unaffected; and ſeeing me young, with the bloom of health in my looks, (without any of that impertinent caution I expected) ſhe agreed to receive me into her ſervice. She then happened to want a ſervant, rather to ſhare with her in the management of a large family, than to be employed in any domeſtick drudgery. I know not why, but ſhe ſeemed pleaſed with me; and I with equal content entered my new ſtation without any melancholy reviews of my paſt grandeur, the dignity of my birth, or the delicacy of my education. The glorious motive, for which I had reſigned the ſplendid vanities of life, gave an unſpeakable alacrity to my mind, and filled it with that ineffable peace that ſprings from conſcious virtue:

Be theſe celeſtial conſolations mine,
And I the world, with all its pomp, reſign

I did

I did not see my new Maſter till the evening, when he came home, with a train, not of beaus and powdered footmen, but of induſtrious honeſt labourers; ſome of his own houſhold, and others hired by the day, whom he punctually paid at the cloſe of it, repeating that rule of the ſacred ſcripture, *Thou ſhalt not ſleep with the wages of an hireling.* He is a very grave man, twice the age of his wife, a perſon of great prudence, and unblemiſh'd honeſty; very hoſpitable to ſtrangers, as gentle and compaſſionate to his ſervants; country buſineſs is his great delight, in the management of which Heaven has bleſſed him with uninterrupted proſperity, and vaſt increaſe.

The Farm-houſe is indeed ſomewhat antique, but ſpacious and pleaſant: A more agreeable ſituation cannot be imagined, nor a greater variety of ſylvan ſcenes deſcribed in poetry, unleſs Mr. *Thomſon*'s SPRING *and* SUMMER SEASONS could riſe in one enchanting proſpect. The wide landſkip round is all my maſter's property; his ſnowy flocks are ranging on the hills, his grazing herds lowing through the plains; the mountains are crowned with the great Creator's boun-

ty, and the vallies made vocal with his praiſes.

Theſe ſcenes of innocence and plenty bring back the Patriarchal Ages to my view, and give me a ſort of pious pleaſure. Methinks I ſee the plains of *Mamre*, covered with the wealthy *Hebrews* flocks and herds, or, ſhifting the ſcene, for the fruitful fields of *Haran*, the beauteous *Rachael* following her fleecy charge, ſeems to come in view, *Boaz* and his reapers appeared to my fancy, in the jovial month of harveſt. In that chearful ſeaſon, here was no wild riot, no rude intemperance; nothing but harmleſs merriment appeared among any of my maſter's domeſticks: As ſoon as they enter his ſervice, he gives them a *Bible*, and *The Practice of Piety*, with ſtrict orders, that they appear conſtantly on the *Lord's Day* at the publick worſhip, unleſs they have ſuch an excuſe as they dare carry to the laſt tribunal.

It will not be incredible to one of your piety, that I can make myſelf eaſy in a way of life ſo different from the gaieties of a court, to which I have been inured. I am not only eaſy, but really happy; my miſtreſs, who has a ſweetneſs of temper not to be equalled, is fond

fond of me, and leaves me not to be idle, but, which is much better, to chuſe my own employment. You know my ſtature is above the common height; and ſince I came here, I am rather grown taller, and ſomewhat more plump, ſo that a little buſineſs does me no manner of harm.

I have entirely put off the fine lady, and all my court airs; I have almoſt forgot I am an Earl's daughter, and ſhould ſtart at the ſound of Lady *Frances*; inſtead of that, I am plain *Roſalinda*, without any other appellation, but what the gentle ſwains now and then give me, of a handſome laſs, or a proper damſel; with which I am infinitely better pleaſed, than when I was an angel, or a goddeſs, and impiouſly addreſſed in the ſtrains of adoration. If ever I return to the modiſh world, I muſt learn to dance again, having perfectly forgot to make my honours: I have made but one courtſey ſince I came here, and that was to a 'Squire, who, becauſe it was ſomething low, and not finiſhed in the twinkling of an eye, catched me by the hand, verily believing I was ſinking to the ground in a fainting fit. I am not turned Quaker, but I have laid aſide all ceremony,

and call every body in the village by their Christian name; except my master and mistress, and the parson of the parish, whom I cannot pass by without telling you, he is a man of exemplary piety, of universal charity, and a great blessing to this place.

My splendid distinction of being the head servant, as it gives me a pretence to keep my distance, and to be as reserved as I think fit; so it frees me from any drudgery, but what is my own choice; the worst of which is rubbing a long oaken table, that graces the hall, and is kept as bright as a looking-glass. My *Saturday*'s work is dressing four or five spacious chimnies with pionies, holly-oaks, or branches of bays. Some part of my time (and that the most delightful) is spent in rambling the fields with my master's children, the pretty boy and girl I mentioned: While they are following their little sports, I give up my thoughts to some innocent reverie, or pious meditation; to this the view of the fair creation invites me; here the present Deity seems to challenge a natural homage, while he chears me in the glory of the sun, refreshes me in the fragrant breeze, is beauty in the flowers of the field,

field, and harmony in the nightingale's voice. With a sort of ecstasy, I repeated *Milton*'s Morning Hymn, to which the *Italian* translation gives new life and musick :

* *Gloriose opre tue tutte son queste*
Padre del bene omnipotente : E' tuo
Questo composto universal, cotanto
A mervigla bello ; or qua'l sarui
Oggetto di stupor, tu stesso
Ineffabil——

But I am not always in the sublime ; I sometimes descend to gather cowslips and daisies, or pursue some gaudy butterfly, with my pretty companions ; or please myself with dressing up their fine flaxen hair with tufts of flowers.

These you will think are very guiltless amusements ; and if I should tell you I have an amour, altogether as guiltless, dear Lady

* These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !
Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair ; thyself how wond'rous then !
Unspeakable——

Milton's Paradise Lost, Book v. l. 153.

Sophia, would you not believe me? I suppose you will ask me, if my charms have captivated the Lord of the Manor, or a Justice of the *Quorum*, or the High Sheriff of the county: Alas! my ambition sleeps; I should not aim at these glorious conquests, not even in my best apparel; and in that, I must tell you, I am as fine as any shepherdess in an *Opera*. But if you was to see the gentle youth, that I have the vanity to think sighs for me, you would believe him some poetical form: He is so elegant, so beautiful, that when he appears, the scene is all *Arcadia*; and (except a certain person with a star and garter) he is the handsomest youth that ever your eyes beheld. Nor will you wonder, when I tell you, his descent is from a younger branch of the *S*— family, a race remarkable for heroes and beauties. By the extravagance of his ancestors, the estate has been long sunk to about two or three hundred a year: This youth was left from his infancy to the care of his grandmother, and bred as well as her narrow fortune would allow; but it is easy to perceive, he owes nothing but to nature, which has given him every advantage, without the vices of a polite education:

cation: He is about my own age, hardly turned of nineteen. When I first saw him, he was sitting under a shady beech, with an *English Pastor Fido* in his hand; he appeared like another *Adonis*, in the softest bloom of life. I cannot describe him better than in the following verses, writ by Lady *B——s* on another subject:

His faultless shape appear'd with ev'ry grace,
While beauty sat triumphant in his face;
His hair, the palest brown, in ringlets flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd:
His forehead white as snow, his radiant eyes
The bright celestial blue that paints the skies:
A guiltless blush his blooming cheeks disclos'd,
The native tincture of an op'ning rose:
His aspect open, artless, and serene,
Reveal'd the spotless mind that dwelt within.

In this perfection of youthful charms, he has all that modesty that rises from a delicacy of thought, and a constant fear of offending. I am so demure and reserved, that he has not the least suspicion of my partiality for him; nor dares discover his own for me, though he believes his station so superior to mine:

He

He looks and ſighs, but is as ſilent as your great grandfather's buſto that ſtands on his monument. I am, indeed, a very great prude, and never gave him an opportunity to ſpeak on this ſubject; but if I ſhould, the attempt would infallibly ſuffocate him. He lately brought me a baſket of flowers from a little neat garden of his grandmother's; but he ſtood ſo long in ſuſpenſe, with the baſket in his hands, that I feared the fragrant bloſſoms would have been withered, before he could come to a reſolution to let me have them.

He would certainly have preſented them to the Queen with more aſſurance, and a better grace, had he been received with thoſe propitious ſmiles, which never fail to encourage modeſt virtue, and ſcatter every human care.

ROSALINDA.



LETTER II.

To Lady SOPHIA, *from the same.*

NOT bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain, were ever more welcome, dear Lady *Sophia*, than your letter to me, nothing can be more solemn than the profession of your friendship, nor more agreeable than your raillery on my gallant. He may be, as you imagine, one of Count *Gabalis's Sylphs*, or some gentle spirit of the vale, propitious to virtuous lovers; or of the number of the Sylvan *Genii*, with whom he seems to converse more than with any thing of human race: I have seldom seen him, but either walking in some verdant inclosure, under a hedge-row of shady trees, or sitting with a flute in his hand, by some purling rivulet, mimicking the nightingale's pensive note; while the melting musick glides along the stream, and echoes through the flowery dale.

In

In one of my rambles with my little miſtreſs, I followed the courſe of a pretty caſcade, which fell from an eaſy deſcent, and led me to a natural bower of trees, whoſe branches mingling at the top, formed a lofty arch, and excluded the noon-day's ſultry beams: I entered the ſilent retreat, with as much veneration as if it had been ſacred to ſome inviſible power; but how great was my ſurprize, when I ſaw the lovely youth reclined on a moſſy bank, loſt in downy ſleep! the verdant couch was canopied over with ivy, twining with honey-ſuckles.

Never did any thing human appear ſo beautiful! A bluſh, like the roſy morning, painted his face, while ſmiles of peace and conſcious innocence ſeemed to bleſs the golden ſlumber: I gazed for a few moments, with the ſame guiltleſs delight, as an ethereal being would inſpire; and then ſoftly with drew.

If he is, as you flatter me, ſome bright inhabitant of the air, the purity of my paſſion is very agreeable to a lover of that kind; it is a harmleſs lambent flame that plays about my heart, and gives me no manner of uneaſineſs; it is ſuch a ſanctity of affection, as neither

neither interrupts nor profanes my devotion; it has ſomething more than the tenderneſs of friendſhip, and leſs than the warmth and violence of paſſion; and ſeems, like the dictates of guiltleſs nature, to ſoften the fatigue of my new ſtation.

Theſe refinements, Lady *Sophia*, will, I fear, be a little incredible to you, who are dazzled with the luſtre of a Duke's coronet, and have placed your affections on mortal charms.

I am now come to the ſerious part of your letter: I know that religion is the governing principle of your actions; which makes me the more ſurprized that you ſhould perſuade me to put myſelf on the hazard of a ſecond trial. Are you ſure, that neither the flattery nor threatnings of my father will prevail with me to renounce the reformed religion, and perjure myſelf, by giving my vows to a man my ſoul deteſts? Do you think the ſparks of vanity and ambition are extinguiſhed in my breaſt? That greatneſs and pleaſure have no charms? Or that the tender affection I have for my father will ever be effaced? Oh! Lady *Sophia*, if you knew the anguiſh it coſt me, to break

through theſe ſoft, theſe powerful engagements, you would not perſuade me to quit this peaceful retreat, and put the event on another trial.

Your care for me ſeems confined to this world, whatever becomes of me in the next: Could you meet me again, ſhining in the drawing-room, or ſparkling in the ring, it would perhaps content you; though I never glittered among the ſtars, nor was admitted into the celeſtial aſſemblies. If I loſt the muſick of the ſpheres, I ſuppoſe your heart would be at reſt, could I once more hear the tranſporting ſound of——a *Title*, and be reſtored to my loſt dignity: And yet the poſſeſſion of theſe privileges never put me in an ecſtaſy; nor can I help fancying, *Roſalinda* has as muſical a ſound as Lady *Frances*: I never found a ſpell in thoſe right honourable ſyllables for an aching head, or an heavy heart: My Ladyſhip finds as great ſatisfaction in ranking a ſet of *Delft* diſhes on a free-ſtone chimney-piece, as ever I had in diſpoſing my fine China on an *Indian* cabinet.

A clean Cambrick cap, and an Holland gown wrought with natural flowers, is the

top of my finery; in which I like myſelf as well, and think I look as handſome, as when I was dreſſed in brocades and jewels for a birth-night. Indeed, that happy occaſion always gave an alacrity to my thoughts, and carried me through the glorious toil with pleaſure: But I have a mind as eaſy and innocent now, as when burthened with thoſe coſtly ornaments; a red croſs-knot, a glaſs necklace, and flowers in my boſom, are the only uſeleſs parts of my dreſs; which is either the gift of nature, or honeſtly paid for; in which I am a thouſand times more happy than I ſhould be in borrowed finery, at the expence of ſome induſtrious trader's ruin, and that of his whole family.

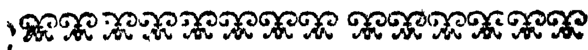
You find, Lady *Sophia*, I am very well at eaſe, and enjoy a perfect tranquillity, in this humble ſtation: It was a principle truly rational and divine, that induced me to give up all the ſplendid diſtinctions of my birth, the eaſe and delicacy to which I had been accuſtomed, rather than baſely deny thoſe ſacred truths, to which my ſoul religiouſly aſſented, and whoſe divine articles ſome of my glorious anceſtors have ſigned with their blood.

Inſtead

Inſtead of looking back with regret on my paſt grandeur, the reſignation gives me a taſte of celeſtial joy; t e ſons of angels could not ſooth me with ſofter harmony, than what reſults from the ſecret approbation of my own reaſon; and while all within is peaceful and ſerene, whether I am in a palace or cottage, my happineſs is ſecure.

ROSALINDA.





LETTER III.

To Lady SOPHIA, *from the ſame.*

YOUR advice, dear Lady *Sophia*, is without queſtion well meant, but I dare not follow it: My father is ſo far from relenting, that I have had intelligence ſince I came here, that he has ſworn by all that is holy, unleſs I will marry Count *Altamont*, and embrace the *Romiſh* religion, he will ſettle his whole eſtate on ſome Monaſtery at his deceaſe.

This was what I expected; and I am ſure you will not perſuade me to renounce Heaven, and damn myſelf, for the ſordid purchaſe of eighty thouſand pounds; nor would you conſiderately adviſe me, to hazard a celeſtial advancement for a gilded coronet, or prefer the flattery of miſtaken mortals to the approbation of Angels: They have been witneſſes of my pious vows; and ſhould I violate

violate my faith, and turn apoſtate to Heaven, thoſe Miniſters of light would bring in their awful evidence, and ſtand my accuſers at the laſt dreadful tribunal: and can you in earneſt think it the effect of wiſdom and juſt reflection, to dare the menaces of divine juſtice, rather than incur my father's unmerited reſentment? Such I muſt term it, having found his affections intirely alienated before I left him: There is full evidence he was pleaſed with my flight, and takes no thought of making any enquiry about it.

But Heaven can witneſs with what reluctance I have torn myſelf from the ſight of this unnatural parent; what anguiſh, what pangs of affection it coſt me! This was the moſt difficult part of my conqueſt; the delicacy and ſoftneſs to which I had been inured, the eclat of birth and quality, reputation and eſteem of my friends, I reſigned with ſome degree of fortitude: But here nature with ſpecious arguments oppoſed, and had triumphed in my prediction, unaſſiſted by the ſacred Oracles; to them I applied in this perplexity, and received aid from the heavenly illuminations: Here I found it by

the eternal Truth determined,—*He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.*—I worſhipped, and obeyed the celeſtial dictates.

This was no raſh inconſiderate action, but the effect of reaſon and deſign: After having counted the coſt, I found the odds to be infinite; the damage was momentary, the recompence unlimited and immenſe.

'Tis finiſh'd now, the great deciding part;
The world's ſubdued, and Heav'n has all my heart.
Earth's gaudy ſhews, and pomp of courts adieu!
For ever now I turn my eyes from you.

What can the World, what can the artifice of Hell propoſe, to tempt me to relinquiſh my choice! What could they lay in the balance againſt the ſovereign good! What could they offer as an equivalent to the favour of the infinite Divinity, whoſe ſmiles enlighten the realms of joy, and fill the celeſtial inhabitants with unutterable ecſtacy! Aſk thoſe happy Spirits, who know what the light of his countenance imports, what ſhould buy one moment's interval of their bliſs:—Aſk ſome radiant Cherub, amidſt his flaming raptures,

raptures, at what price he values his enjoyment:—And when they have named the purchase, Earth and Hell may try to balance my glorious expectations;

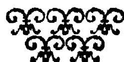
Pleasure would court in vain, and beauty smile,
Glory in vain my wishes would beguile;
The persecutor's rage I would not fear!
Let death in ev'ry horrid form appear,
And with his keenest darts my breast assail;
When breath, and ev'ry vital spring, shall fail,
This sacred flame on brighter wings shall rise,
And unextinguish'd reach its native skies.

A thousand times blest be that propitious power, who from the plenitude of bliss, and the highest exaltation of glory, descended to low mortality; and by his own great example and sufferings animated my breast with this divine fortitude, and marked a way to victory and immortal honour. How sincerely I have followed the heavenly illumination, my witness is within, and my record on high. My father, I know, is inexorable, and has cut me off from his paternal care, and all the privileges of my birth; but while I look forward to the bright recompence prepared for suffer-

ſuffering virtue, this loſs ſits lightly on my ſoul.

But friendſhip with a ſtronger force detains me: Here my ſoul is in ſuſpence.— Dear Lady *Sophia*, how ſhall I ſpeak my laſt adieu? I feel the pangs of ſeparation, an anguiſh beyond all the emphaſis of human learning to utter.—Adieu! we muſt meet no more, 'till the courſe of nature is diſſolved, and the ſun has meaſured his laſt radiant circle round the ſkies.

ROSALINDA.





LETTER IV.

To LAURINDA.

JOIN with me, dear *Laurinda*, in thanking Heaven, that I am once more returned to the mansion-seat of my forefathers; for had I staid much longer in *London*, I had certainly left my wits there: Would you believe that my serious retired temper could find charms in a multitude, or my heart be held captive in a splendid circle of a blue garter! That I who have been used to view the stars which glittered over my head in a clear night, should be dazzled with the lustre of an embroidered one! And yet all this has befallen me. I was the other day making a visit to *Cleomira*, when the Duke of——'s chariot with three laced footmen behind it stopped at the door; I was at the window, and saw him alight: He is really a handsome man, but his charms were extremely increased by the pomp which surrounded

ed him; and respectful awe with which his attendants approached him, heightened the majesty of his appearance; his legs were formed into the exactest symmetry by the magnificent clocks of his stockings: The deference which was paid him at his first coming into the room, taught me to look upon him as something above the race of mortals, which I had been used to converse with. When I had time to consider his face, I found it received a much greater addition from a fair wig loaded with powder, than it could have done from artless ringlets of the most lovely hair. After he had sat a little, he asked *Cleomira* to go with him to his house, to see a fine set of hangings, which were just come over from the *Gobelins*: She excused herself, as being obliged to stay and entertain me; but he asked me to be of the party; and as soon as *Cleomira*'s coach was ready, we all went together. But if I was charmed with the sparkling chariot and embroidered coat, I was enchanted with the house; the lofty roofs, the painted stair-case, and gilded wainscot, struck me with a pleasure I had never felt; however, it was an unquiet joy, and I longed to be at home; for I

thought myſelf in a dangerous ſituation. As ſoon as *Cleomira* had ſet me down at my lodgings, I immediately ſet about packing up my things; and the very next morning, in the height of my ecſtacy, left *London* and all its pomp behind me: But how are either my eyes or every object altered ſince I have been abſent! The houſe uſed to appear a handſome antient building, but now I find it only a *Gothick* heap of ſtone; the cielings are ſo low, that I am afraid of knocking my brains out; and the entry ſo narrow, that if I ſhould meet any body, I ſhould certainly run back again, for fear of being ſqueezed againſt the wall in endeavouring to paſs. I went to pull down the venerable pictures of my anceſtors, becauſe they were not painted in *Italy*: The Bow-windows terrify me, and muſt be changed into *Venetian* ones; for there is no bearing the light which ſtrikes through ſo unfaſhionable a piece of architecture. The roſy daughters of the neigbouring 'Squires are become in my eyes aukward figures, and there is ſomething ſo ungenteel and coarſe in ſuch an exuberance of health, that I cannot bear to look at them: The young men of the village appear downright bumpkins, and I cannot perceive any beauty in the

chearful

chearful bloom of their countenances, or just proportion of their shape thro' the melancholy disguise of unpowdered locks and plain broad cloth apparel; if they talk to me, I am amazed how a man has the assurance to open his mouth any-where, who has not a right to speak in the House of Peers, and can never comprehend how any thing worth communicating can enter into a head which was never circled with a coronet: Sentences which are uttered by plain *Cleon*, have no force, tho' perhaps the same words would have all the charms of eloquence, if pronounced by an Earl.

You see I am not very happy at present in the society of my old acquaintance; but I hope this delicacy will soon wear off, or I shall not be able to behave myself patiently among a set of people, with whom I have formerly spent many happy hours.

Adieu, my dear *Laurinda*; My politeness will not lessen, but increase the value I set upon your friendship; since I am sure the Beaumonde would approve me for being unalterably

Yours, &c.

LAVINIA.



LETTER V.

The Sequel of the Story of SYLVIA, *in the Third Letter in the First Part of* Letters Moral and Entertaining.

To BELINDA.

MADAM,

YOUR ſuſpicions are too juſt, of the occaſion of my late ſickneſs: I have waited with great impatience for the ſatisfaction of diſcloſing the ſecrets of my ſoul to you; but my ſtrength would no ſooner permit me to give you this proof of my obedience to your commands, and the confidence I have in your fidelity.

Why was I formed with theſe ſoft inclinations, this fatal propenſity to love! How happy are you, who amidſt the gayeſt advantages of youth and fortune, can act with ſuch a graceful regularity, and govern your paſſions with an abſolute command, free from thoſe tender emotions which interrupt the felicity of my life!

I ſpent

I ſpent the laſt winter in the country with my father, whoſe pious inſtructions, confirmed by his own practice, directed me to a refined and immortal happineſs: Nor could any invitations from the *Comteſſe de R——*, nor all my brother's importunity, prevail with me to quit a retirement, where I found ſo much peace, and unmoleſted tranquillity. My criminal paſſion for *Monſieur le Comte* — ſeemed perfectly extinguiſhed, and gave place to a nobler attachment; Heaven had all my vows, thither with a divine ambition my ſoul aſpired: This ſacred ardour like incenſe mingled with the morning fragrance, and cheared the evening ſhades; the whiſpering brooks and ſylvan retreats witneſſed to the heavenly flame; where, in language like this, I often addreſſed the inviſible, but preſent Divinity:

" O thou, whom unſeen I love, tell me " by what gentle influence thou doſt attract " my deſires. Theſe eyes have never ſeen " thy lovely face, no accent of thy voice " has reached my ear; and yet thou art " more intimate to my ſoul than any of the " objects of ſenſe: To thee I tell my inmoſt " care, and open every grief; while ſome

" heavenly gale dispels the gloom, and " breathes eternal peace and fragrance on " my soul.

" *Not blest* Arabia, *when her spices flow,*
" *And load the western breezes with their spoils,*
" *Is half so sweet, nor half so sweet the breath*
" *Of op'ning roses, when the dewy morn*
" *Renews the garden's pride, while the glad sun*
" *Calls out the blooming life of ev'ry flow'r.*

" My wishes fly beyond the bounds of this " low creation, and terminate in Thee, the " spring of fresh and ever-blooming joys: " 'Tis Thee, abstractly Thee, oh, uncreated " beauty, that I love! not as a miser loves " his wealth, or the ambitious his grandeur; " not as the libertine loves his pleasure, or " the generous man his friend: These are " flat similitudes, and would profane the " sacred ardour; but thou can'st read the " unutterable thought, and explain the se- " cret meaning of my soul: Search its in- " most recesses; and if thou findest any " competitor there, remove the darling vani- " ty, and blot every name but thine from my heart."

In

In this elevation, my dear *Belinda*, would you not think me ſecure from mortal charms? Could one of your equal temper conceive there was ſuch an eaſy tranſition from devotion to love,——mere earthly love! Would the moſt uncharitable perſon in the world have ſaid, that from this ſublime ſituation I ſhould in a few moments quit the ſkies, and bid the Angels farewell!

But ſuch was the event; my brother coming haſtily to me into the garden, where I was walking, told me the *Comte de R*—— intended him the honour of a viſit, and would be with us the next morning: He left me immediately, without obſerving the conſternation I was in, or giving himſelf any trouble about my panick or vapours.

I knew not what or where I was; the celeſtial ſcenes that had juſt before engaged my contemplation vaniſhed; the Heavens were no more; Paradiſe, with all its glories, diſappeared like a Fairy viſion; my flight was finiſhed, and I ſunk to low mortality again: I aſked myſelf if I were aſleep or awake, in my right ſenſes or out of my wits; whether I really knew my own name, and was indeed the happy perſon, that, a

few minutes before, had looked with indifference or contempt on all the gay allurements of the world? In this confusion I stood as if I had been fixed to the place by a spell, 'till my father sent for me to consult about some family affairs, as he had always done since my mother's death.

The *Comte*'s visit was wholly intended to my Brother; they were engaged in the most perfect friendship, founded on resembling virtues, and an equal abhorrence of every kind of vice: It was a full year since I had seen him; it was probable he never suspected my folly, nor once imagined the cause of my retirement; this yielded me some satisfaction, and gave me hopes I should conceal my guilty passion.

But I was undeceived the moment the lovely youth arrived; an innate grandeur gave a dignity to his mien; the splendour of virtue brightened his aspect; there was something in his whole behaviour so benign and engaging, that I found it impossible to resist the soft insinuation; the pleasing delirium entirely possessed me, and I betrayed myself by a thousand inadvertencies: However, I had some pauses of discretion, and started

ſtarted with horror at my own injuſtice; my ſoul was full of anxiety, to think how I ſhould bear this inward ſtruggle for the ſeven or eight days which the *Comte* intended to ſtay, the firſt of which was not yet paſt.

The ſummer was now in its pride; and as ſoon as the evening made walking pleaſant, my brother conducted his agreeable gueſt through a variety of charming walks to an artificial grotto: The top was round and lofty, painted with a beautiful ſky, hung with a great number of little cryſtal ſconces formed like ſtars; in the midſt there was placed one larger than the reſt, ſhaped like a creſcent. The ſides of this fine cavity were rock-work, adorned with branches of coral, mother-of-pearl, and a great variety of counterfeit gems, ſparkling among the well-imitated clifts of marble: It was paved in flowers with a kind of moſaick-work; the ſeats were ſhaped like little banks, covered with green velvet inſtead of moſs. In this inchanting ſeat a ſupper was ordered, attended with an exquiſite concert of voices and inſtruments; *Milton's* Morning Hymn was ſung, and ſeveral of the ſolemneſt *Italian* Compoſures. The whole performance was noble and

pathetick, while the gardens and groves around returned a thousand soft melodious echoes.

The grave musick was exactly suited to the charming stranger's genius; and yet, through the whole evening, never did any thing appear so abstract, so listless, and so inattentive. As soon as the entertainment was over, and the company withdrawn, (except my brother) he begged to be excused from staying a week, as he designed, and that he might be suffered to return the next morning; which, after some apologies on both sides, was agreed.

I was so ill in the morning, that it prevented my seeing the *Comte*, who could not but discover the unhappy conquest he had made, and certainly left us so suddenly, to free me from such a criminal perplexity, or to stifle the same kindling guilt in his own breast: This last was what my brother believed, and thought it as glorious an instance of virtue and friendship, as it was possible for a man in the warmth of youthful passion to give.

Whatever it was, my disorder increased, 'till it came to a dangerous fever; Death was now in view, my tender cares, and fancied

distresses

diſtreſſes, were loſt in a more important concern; the little amuſements of the world vaniſhed like dreams; a hovering miſt veiled the face of nature, and darkened all its beauty; nor could any ſound of joy chear the ſullen hours: I was on the confines of the grave, entering the habitations of the dead: This proſpect had a ſolemnity in it, beyond whatever I conceived in the hours of health.

"*Think, vain fond heart, when on the ſteep*
"*Of that tremendous awful deep,*
"*Eternity, in ſad ſuſpenſe I ſtood,*
"*How all my trifling hopes and fears,*
"*My ſenſeleſs joys, and idle tears,*
"*Vaniſh'd at proſpect of the frightful flood!*"

I ſtood ſhivering on the brink, looking forward with a dreadful curioſity; all before me was hid in darkneſs, and impenetrable ſecrecy; the great experiment was untried, the region of ſpirits ſtrange and unknown; it was yet, perhaps, an uncertainty, on which my hopes depended; the grand queſtion, whether I ſhould be happy or miſerable for ever was yet undecided; I was ſtartled at a mere poſſibility of being ſhut out of the

ſtarry

ſtarry courts, and excluded from the illuſtrious aſſembly of happy immortals.

Indeed I had no intervals of deſpair, my hopes and fears were equally balanced; no allowed or unrepented crime preſſed my ſoul: Virtue had been my early, and deliberate choice, the ſuperior deſign and governing ſpring of all my conduct: I hope I had made ſome preparation for death, and had often meditated on the ſerious ſubject; but it was in the hours of perfect health and vivacity: I had never before groaned on a ſick bed; theſe ſolemnities were new, and infinitely more awful than I had ever conceived.

Death threatened me now at a diſadvantage, in a criſis of folly, an unuſual diſorder of mind; ſickneſs and pain gave every thing a gloomy aſpect, and heightened even natural frailties into the blackeſt guilt; while the griſly monarch ſtood inſulting before me, and drew his ſable curtains round my bed; but a ſuperior power reſcued me from his ravenous jaws, and bid me live, to ſpeak my great Deliverer's praiſe.

This ſickneſs has given me another ſet of thoughts; my apprehenſions of dying are as different from what they were before, as the evidence of waking certainties are

are from the airy illuſions of a dream: My notions were once very gay and romantick; I fancied I ſhould take my final leave of the world with an exceeding good grace, and bid adieu very ſedately to all the vanities beneath the ſun: 'Till it came to a trial, I was for making my exit in the full bloom of my youth, and quitting the ſtage in the moſt becoming manner. While the fatal moment appeared at a diſtance, I was delighted with ſuch images of mortality as the author of the following verſes has deſcribed, and with great gaiety repeated theſe lines:

Indulgent Death, prepare thy gentle dart,
To ſtrike a willing and unguarded heart:
Where are thy dreadful looks, and gloomy train?
Fantaſtick mortals all theſe Terrors feign:
Thou haſt an Angel's ſmile, and heav'nly grace;
I find tranſporting beauties in thy face,
And yield unforc'd, unto thy cold embrace.
Come a joyful captive to thy arms;
This moment has for me ten thouſand charms:
For thee all human things I here reſign;
My ſpotleſs faith, and virgin vows, are thine.

Myrtillo's

Myrtillo's *sighs, and* Sylvia's *tears in vain*
In these dull regions would my soul retain.
Forbear your fruitless grief; I go to prove
Unbounded pleasures, and immortal love:
Oh, let me unmolested, close my eyes;
We'll meet again in yonder blissful skies!

Young virgins haste, a flow'ry wreath prepare,
And dress with guiltless ornaments my hair;
Adorn me with the summer's painted pride,
And lay the vestments of the dead aside;
Nor let a pensive look or mournful tear,
To cloud the lustre of your eyes, appear:
Each nymph be dress'd in robes of spotless light,
The folding streaming fair with silver white;
Let smiles on all your lovely faces shine,
Nor at my glorious destiny repine:
With decent joy conduct me to the tomb,
And hang your garlands round my solitary room.

This is to expire in heroicks, to give up the ghost with a poetical decorum, and to be interred *à-la-mode d'Arcadia.* Such sentiments as these may pleasingly amuse the mind in the hours of health and serenity; but it requires a strength superior to all human

man fortitude to ſupport the ſoul in the agonies of ſeparation; there the aids of reaſon and nature fail; only a power Divine can diſperſe the fatal gloom, and brighten it into celeſtial day.

This long Letter is owing to your own curioſity, and muſt be the excuſe of,

MADAM,

Yours, &c.

SYLVIA.



LETTER VI.

To LETICIA, *giving an Account of the Death of* AMANDA.

I Am juſt returned from paying my laſt ceremony to the remains of the late beautiful *Amanda:* The ſurprizing ſtate in which for ſeveral weeks the corpſe lay, the richneſs of the coffin, or the pomp with which ſhe was interred, could no way diſguiſe from my thoughts the melancholy circumſtances that attended the laſt ſcene of her life: I never think of the manner of her death, but a thouſand terrors riſe in my imagination, to reproach me for joining with the reſt of her flatterers, in concealing her danger, and ſoothing her with hopes of recovery, till death convinced her of the fatal deluſion.

On this ſubject I hope you will give me leave to be ſerious; my youth, which you ſo often object againſt the gravity of my temper,

temper, is no argument in this caſe; the fair *Amanda* was ſtill younger, and yet, after all her bloom and vivacity, I ſaw her a pale and ſenſeleſs carcaſe.

" *How lately did this celebrated thing*
" *Shine in the box, and ſparkle in the ring!*"

It is true the mouldering clay, by a ſtately monument, is diſtinguiſhed from vulgar duſt; but how poor a conſolation is that to an immortal ſpirit, fated to endleſs miſery, or unbounded joy!

You may laugh, and in poor wild wit ridicule theſe ſolemn reflections, and lampoon me with the character of a ſaint; but, my dear *Leticia*, this mirth would be more unſeaſonable and ridiculous than my morals: However, I am more charitable than to accuſe you of ſuch levity.

Since you have put me, by your own commands, on this melancholy account, I hope it will be for your advantage, when you come to act the cloſing part of life.

I told you, in my laſt letter, the accidental reaſon of being in the ſame houſe with *Amanda*, and her full reſolution not to go into the country, however neceſſary it was for her

her health; no argument could prevail with her to quit the amuſements of the town, in which ſhe had always a ſhare, 'till the poſitive order of her phyſicians confined her from going abroad: Her diſtemper was lingering, but incurable; this, in my hearing, the Doctor owned to her elder ſiſter, in whoſe family ſhe was: He told us, that he thought two or three months would be the utmoſt limits of her life; which he begged might be concealed, and that we would keep her as chearful as poſſible: But the natural gaiety of her temper prevented that care; for her buſineſs was, to get rid of time and leiſure. She could not go to the maſquerade, but took care to let her acquaintance know how welcome their appearance, in every fantaſtick diſguiſe, would be in her own apartment: She languiſhed after the delights of the ſtage; but, to ſupply that, orders were given for ſome farce or comedy to be read for her diverſion: Sometimes a game at piquet paſſed away the tedious moments; ſhe has often kept the cards in her hands, 'till a ſwooning fit interrupted the important affair. This, you will think, was a pious preparation for the laſt change! a glorious

manner

manner of concluding the action of human life!

Her beauty was as much her joy and contemplation as ever: She was exceeding pale; but there was a certain elegance in her features, and something so peculiarly charming in her air, that triumphed over her indisposition; and to give a flush to her complexion, she had prevailed with her sister to change her window-curtains, which were yellow silk, for some of a bright crimson: Her toilet took up as much of her time as her strength would permit; the adjusting a becoming and modish undress would sometimes so exhaust her spirits, that she was forced to pause, and leave the mighty task unfinished: It was but two days before she died, that she ordered the most fashionable *deshabille* to be sent for from *France*; as if designed to expire genteelly, and appear polite, even in the languishments of death.

Her sister, tho' many years older, under the influence of the same unhappy education, indulged the vanity of her inclination in every punctilio; whatever was the consequence, the dying fair must be diverted from every thing that was reasonable and serious: One would wonder her invention could

could find ſuch a ſeries of impertinencies; monkeys, parrots, buffoons, ſoft muſick, and tender ſongs, were always ready to entertain every little interval of eaſe or ſtrength the poor unthinking patient had.

This to me was the moſt melancholy ſcene in the world: I have forced a ſmile, when my heart has been inwardly bleeding with grief and compaſſion: Not a day paſt, but with tears ſtreaming from my eyes, I importuned *Marina* to let her ſiſter know her danger, and to ſend for a neighbouring Clergyman, of great piety, ſometimes to pray with her, and, at leaſt, to acquaint her, ſhe was not immortal; that it was poſſible for her to die, as well as other people.

This advice ſhe rejected, as poſitively as if I had perſuaded her to ſend for an executioner, to diſpatch her ſiſter into the next world: *Then, Madam,* ſaid I, *at leaſt forbear to diſtract and hinder her from every ſerious reflection.*

Serious reflection! my dear Emilia, (ſhe replied) *where have you learnt this cant? How long have you practiſed that ſaintly air? Look into the glaſs, and ſee if you can forbear laughing at yourſelf; would you have me put on that preciſe*

precise look, and murder my sister, by telling her, that she had but a month to live! It would infallibly throw her into the agonies of death: You cannot be so barbarous to give me this advice! You know what effect our pious fraud had, of putting St. Austin's Meditations *into her hands, instead of* Otway's Plays; *the accidental opening it at a meditation on death, had almost thrown her into a convulsion. But this* (continued she) *is the effect of your strange notions; you represent the supreme Being in such a gloomy view, that it makes you perfectly superstitious: My thoughts, I confess, are more lightsome and free; I believe the mercies of Heaven unbounded, and that there is nothing in these little gaieties offensive to God, or injurious to man: Nor, indeed, is a future state of punishment any part of my Creed; I make no question but my sister will be insensible or happy whenever she dies, and it shall be my business to make her so the short space she has to live, which may be a month or two longer, by the Doctor's conjectures the last visit he made. Come,* (added she) *you must go with me, and endeavour to divert her; but pray put off that sanctified aspect, and try to look a little more like an inhabitant of this world.*

I could

I could not refuse attending her to *Amanda*'s apartment, whom we found in a musing melancholy posture; which to divert, *Marina* told her, she looked exceeding well, and nothing could be more genteel than the *desbabille*, in which she appeared: This a little brightened the chagrin on her visage, and made her something attentive to the pranks of a new monkey, which her page had just introduced to divert his fair mistress; who, in the midst of the recreation, was seized with a fainting fit, sunk back in an easy chair, and, after a few hours convulsive pangs, gave up the ghost.

I have been so particular in this account, in hopes it will have a lasting influence on your conduct; and, by being faithful to my living friend, I may atone, if possible, for my insincerity to the dead. I have a thousand and a thousand times reproached myself, for not letting *Amanda* plainly know her danger; leaving the event to Heaven. I am convinced it was my duty, in spite of all the false rules by which the friendship of this world is guided.

These two sisters had the misfortune, in their early years, to lose their mother, and were left to the conduct of a father, who

made

made it his pride to think and live freely; he looked on all religion as a State Policy, and put the *Bible* and *Alcoran* on a level; with these principles he perverted his daughters minds, and, except observing the strictest forms of honour and reputation, they were governed by no rule but their caprice, and the fashions of the age. Thus they saw their father live, and thus they saw him die, entirely negligent, and thoughtless of any thing beyond the period of human life: Instead of prayers and pious meditations, one of his libertine companions read *Dryden*'s translation of *Lucretius* to him, in his last hours; while fearless and insensible he met death and all its succeeding horrors.

Amanda's death has made a deep impression on my thoughts; I have bid the modish world adieu, and am now retired to my brother's country seat. You may call it the spleen, but I hope it is the effect of just reasoning, that I have never read any thing since I came hither, but books of Devotion. Mr. *Law*'s excellent Treatise of Christian Perfection has been instructive to me: The character of *Miranda* has raised a noble emulation in my mind, tho' I despair of reaching that perfection.

If you make me a viſit, you will not find me engaged in cards at one-and-thirty, nor telling riddles, or drawing Valentines with my country neighbours; but muſing by the ſide of a gentle caſcade, or ſitting in ſome fragrant bower, liſtening to the ſongs of Heaven in Dr. *Watts*'s pious numbers:

"*Hark! how beyond the narrow bounds*
"*Of time and ſpace they run,*
"*And ſpeak in moſt majeſtick ſounds*
"*The Godhead of the Son;*

"*How on the Father's breaſt he lay,*
"*The darling of his ſoul,*
"*Infinite years before the day,*
"*Or Heav'ns began to roll.*

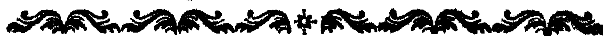
"*And now they ſink their lofty tone,*
"*And milder notes they play;*
"*And bring th' eternal Godhead down,*
"*To dwell in humble clay.*"

If this long letter ſhould give you the ſpleen, I hope it will be your advantage; nothing but that is the intention of,

MADAM,

Your moſt humble Servant,

EMILIA.



LETTER VII.

The Anſwer to EMILIA.

YOUR letter, I hope, will be a reſtraint on the great levity of my temper: The account of *Amanda*'s death will leave me without excuſe, if I ſhould carry my vanity ſo far, as to act the laſt part of life with ſo little propriety. I cannot, without the warmeſt gratitude to heaven, reflect on the advantage of a different education and principles, which I hope will never be effaced from my ſoul.

But, my dear *Emilia*, I ſhall never be ſo good as you would have me, nor as I ſincerely deſire to be; I have yet ſome tender engagements to break, before I bid adieu to the world, and rank myſelf in the number of departed ſpirits: I cannot on a ſudden contract ſuch intimacies with inviſible beings, as to abandon all my material acquaintance.

I despair of following you and *Miranda*, who, if you were *Roman-Catholicks*, are in a fair way of being canonized (as many a miserable sinner has been before you:) Of whatever Religion I am, it is certain I shall never be numbered in the same class with St. *Wirefrid*.

You love Poetry, and it is a pleasure to me to oblige you with any thing writ on a subject so agreeable to your taste, as these verses inscribed to Mrs. *M*—, a person of strict piety, tho' she does not turn recluse, and live in a grotto, but converses freely with the polite world, and keeps an unblemished character in it. I will leave you now to your shady retreats, and murmuring brooks.

On SOLITUDE.

Inscribed to Mrs. *M*———.

Ye groves, and flow'ry vales, in you we find
The first unblemish'd joys for man design'd;
Your charming scenes th' attentive mind supply
With pleasure in it's nice variety:
Nature does here her virgin smiles afford,
And shews us Paradise again restor'd;

Our

Our souls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care, and conscious guilt retire.

Propitious Solitude! thou kind retreat
From all the vain amusements of the great!
In thee alone, without disgust we prove
The endless sweets of innocence and love:
Beauty and wit may find a refuge here,
Unenvy'd ev'n Belinda *might appear;*
Each nymph would yield the uncontested prize,
And ev'ry swain pay homage to her eyes.
Flourish, ye gentle shades, and rural seats;
Let endless verdure deck your soft retreats;
Peace dwell upon your banks, ye silver streams,
The Muses chaste delights, and constant themes!
For ever you the Poet's breast inspire,
With sprightly joys, and wake the golden lyre.

Retir'd in fragrant bow'rs, the Hebrew *King,*
For Pharaoh's *daughter, touch'd the tuneful string;*
The fair Egyptian's *charms his soul possest,*
And fill'd with sacred ecstasies his breast;
Celestial numbers melted from his tongue,
In human figures truths divine were sung,
While Lebanon's *high cedars lent an ear,*
And Siloe *rose above its banks to hear;*

Hermon *and* Carmel *kept the pleasing lay,*
And Sharon's *painted vale appear'd more gay.*

What pow'r, enchanting solitude, is thine!
That men, for thee, the dearest ties resign:
For thee the Monarch lays his crown aside,
And the young lover quits his weeping bride;
The Hero gives the chace of honour o'er,
And fame, and glorious conquest tempt no more;
The softer sex, with fearless piety,
To woods and savage wilds have follow'd thee.

Fair Magdalen *the flatt'ring world declin'd,*
And to a narrow cave her charms confin'd:
In Herod's *wanton court admir'd she shone,*
And all the tempting paths of vice had known;
To her's, the beauties of the Hebrew *race,*
Rachael *and* Tamar's *boasted fame, gave place:*
Love triumph'd in her voice, her looks, and mien,
And love in all her fatal form was seen;
A thousand youthful hearts her pow'r obey'd,
And homage to her soft dominion paid:
But thus in Nature's gayest bloom admir'd,
A penitent she gloriously retir'd;
Her costly ornaments are laid aside,
With all the vain address of female pride:

Her

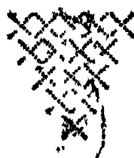
Her hair neglected, o'er her bosom flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd;
A mourning robe she wore, a pensive grace,
And soft remorse, sat on her lovely face;
A vaulted rock for her retreat she chose,
Among the clifts a murm'ring fountain rose;
Here contemplation, pray'r, and lofty praise,
In solemn order measur'd out her days:
To Heaven her vows with early ardour fled,
Before the Sun his morning glories spread;
When from his height he pour'd down golden streams,
Her wing'd devotion met his noon-day beams;
'Till in the West with fainter light he shone,
Untir'd the heav'nly votary went on:
The Moon serene in midnight splendour sat,
With countless Stars, attending on her state;
The cares and noisy business of the day,
In rest, and soothing dreams, dissolv'd away;
The drowsy waters crept along the shore,
And shepherds pin'd upon the banks no more;
The trees their whispers ceas'd, the gentle gale
No longer danc'd along the dewy vale;
The peaceful echoes, undisturb'd with sound,
Lay slumb'ring in the cavern'd hills around;
Faction and care, and midnight riot slept;
But still the lovely Saint her holy vigils kept.

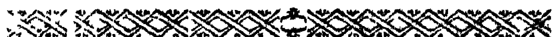
If you could but find ſuch a convenient habitation as this, it would be to your heart's content: For my part, I ſhall never hide my virtue in obſcurity; it ſhall not be my fault, if the World is not inſtructed by my example. But to be ſerious, I verily believe we have both the ſame important intereſts in view, though we are ſo different in our tempers; we never meet but it puts me in mind of the two weeping and laughing Philoſophers. The very ſame cauſe has often had the oppoſite effect on our diſpoſitions; but in ſpite of this ſeeming contradiction, that ſacred amity by which we are united, ſhall never be violated by,

MADAM,

Your obedient humble Servant,

LETITIA.





LETTER VIII.

To LETICIA, *in answer to the foregoing Letter.*

IF you have heard of my Brother's death, you can be no stranger to the excess of my grief: The Poem you sent, came very seasonably; in the fair Penitent, I found a plan of life, suited to my melancholy temper; which has found more relief by a sort of visionary consolation, than from all the efforts of reason; you have often thought fit to divert me with your sleeping as well as waking reveries, and I know I cannot oblige you more than by relating this uncommon dream.

Whether it was the excursion of fancy, or whether the scene was disposed by an Angel, I cannot determine: But as I was sitting in a Summer-house, my usual retreat in an afternoon, reading *Milton's* Elegy on *Lycidas*, a downy slumber closed my eyes, and sunk my sorrows in the pleasing oblivion.

I found myself in a place gay as the Poet's description of the *Cyprian* Groves; beneath

an inviting ſhade I reſted on a bank of violets, and without ſurprize, ſaw my Brother in a glittering habit, and beautiful beyond the race of men, approaching: He ſeated himſelf by me, and with a ſmile of celeſtial charity thus began:

" It is with the higheſt ſatisfaction, my " dear Siſter, I come to give you a relation " that will animate your virtue. As you aſ- " ſiſted mine in a ſtate of mortal imperfec- " tion, you know I had ſome intervals of " doubt, and Nature ſhrunk at the entrance " of the gloomy valley; the darkneſs was " untried and impenetrable: But how great " was my ſurprize, when I found this mo- " mentary night ſucceeded by an eternal " noon! While my Guardian Angel, with " an aſpect of ineffable ſweetneſs, bid me " follow him.

" I obeyed: In an inſtant the Earth was " loſt to my view; the Sun diminiſhed to a " Star; innumerable Worlds were paſt, with " a ſpeed ſwifter than a morning ray; the " gates of Heaven now appeared, and at the " Angel's command rolled back on their " golden hinges: But what glories were diſ- " cloſed, no language on earth can deſcribe!

" Omnipo-

" Omnipotence and infinite wiſdom ſeemed
" without limits here to have been exerted;
" through enchanting groves I traced the
" delicious borders, where the fountains of
" life pour out their ſtreams; paſſing from
" one ſcene of wonders to another, ardent
" to pay my homage, I preſſed forward to
" the ſacred throne.

" The Supreme Benignity at once beam-
" ed forth on me: Loſt in ecſtaſy, I fell pro-
" ſtrate before my Sovereign, when with
" accents that breathed immortal joy and
" harmony, he bid me riſe to perfect purity
" and bliſs.

" A ſtarry Tiara was placed on my head,
" and a golden lute in my hand; I mingled
" with the grand aſſembly, the thouſand
" times ten thouſand, ranſomed from every
" language and tribe on earth: With them
" I joined my grateful tribute to the great
" Benefactor of mankind, whoſe ſufferings
" and death hath given me acceptance, vic-
" tory, and life; I rejoiced in God my Saviour;
" I triumphed in the height of his exalta-
" tion; infinite Majeſty, ſoftened by equal
" love, appeared in his form, the bright-
" neſs of the Divinity, the joy of Heaven,
" the theme of every celeſtial ſong.

"I have made this impression on your "sleeping imagination, being permitted to "give you no other account of my happi-"ness: Be not impatient of the afflictions of "life; the whole of your mortal duration is "but a moment, to the future recompence; "if you live to the honour of your Maker, "and the advantage of your companions on "earth, it will for ever heighten the trans-"ports of your joy in the realms of light."

Here with soft melody the pleasing scene vanished: I waked at the imaginary musick, and found it had left a calm and sedate composure in my soul; like a beam from Heaven it dispersed the gloom, and opened a serene and lightsome prospect before me.

——Ye dreary wastes, adieu!
Reason, Religion, now I follow you.
Enough to Nature and the grave are paid:
Behold, the fair celestial scene's display'd.

It appeared too regular for a natural excursion of fancy, but I shall leave that undetermined; amidst all your gaieties, you are as guiltless of incredulity as

Your humble Servant,

EMILIA.



LETTER IX.

The Anſwer to EMILIA.

I Am not ſurpriſed, that ſuch a ſhining viſion as you have deſcribed, has allayed your grief, and reſtored the tranquillity of your mind; but I am afraid you are not yet gay enough, to excuſe the vivacity of my temper, or ſuffer me to laugh: It is without your conſent if I am happy, and very much pleaſed with any of the tranſitory vanities of this World; which, I muſt own, have ſome prevailing charms for me, from whoſe ſoft captivity I cannot yet get free.

I was laſt night at a play, in which there was the part of a Princeſs well acted, and the ſentiments belonging to the character were juſt and noble; yet I was not half ſo well pleaſed as I had often been before with the ſame repreſentation: I ſoon found the reaſon of my diſſatisfaction, and the difference between imitated and real greatneſs:——The

Princess Royal was at the Play, and juſt in my view: All that elegance and dignity of thought, the Poet had deſcribed, brightened her aſpect; every virtue was there conſpicuou ; the gentle, the engaging ſmile was beyond the reach of nu bers: A thouſand nameleſs graces diſcovered the innate perfections of her mind, and gave the charming Princeſs a diſtinction peculiar to conſcious merit, and beyond all imitation.

I intend you a viſit before the Spring (that faireſt ſeaſon of the year) is paſt. I am willing to ſee you once more in this world; for I am not ſure we ſhall meet in the next, tho' I ſincerely deſire it; nothing will more contribute to my happineſs than your converſation; I catch ſome emanation of your virtue, and am inſpired with new convictions of the vanity of the world; my reaſon gains ground, and my paſſions ſubſide. I may venture to look grave in your company, but in my preſent modiſh way of life, I dare not ſo much as put on an air of thought and reflection, nor ſeem to have any thing in the earth to do, but to amuſe myſelf, and the volatile Beings I converſe with. You ſee, if I was wiſer than I really am, I ſhould

take

take pains to conceal it, rather than be ſingular and unfaſhionable.

I have ſent the verſes I promiſed to procure for you.

On BEAUTY.

Victorious Beauty! by what potent charm
Doſt thou the ſoul of all its force diſarm!
We bleſs our chains, abhor our liberty,
And yield the unconteſted prize to thee:
Whether we raſh or calm deſigns purſue,
Thine is the glorious motive ſtill in view:
For thee we ſearch the wide creation round,
But thou art no where in perfection found;
Some blemiſh ſtill remains on mortal pride,
And crowding years its airy boaſts deride.
Triumphant beauty ſits in Flavia'*s eyes;*
But while we gaze, the trembling luſtre dies.
Bellair'*s completely form'd with ev'ry grace,*
A faultleſs ſhape, and an inchanting face;
In all his motions, each becoming air,
Greatneſs and native elegance appear;
Careleſs and free, in life's deluding bloom,
While envious death threatens a haſty doom,
Some gentle miſtreſs, full of love and truth,
Shall ſoon lament the dear unrival'd youth.

Thou

Thou lovely, fleeting, transitory thing,
From what immense Perfection dost thou spring!
To what complete Original return,
While we thy short appearance vainly mourn!
Howe'er our doating thoughts mistake thy way
To certain bliss, thine is a friendly ray
That points the passage to unclouded day.
Ye heav'nly forms, in all your pomp appear,
And shew us what immortal beauties are,
What life, what rosy bloom your faces wear!
Put on each smiling grace, and conqu'ring charm,
And all the force of mortal love disarm:
For still our restless thoughts take glorious aims,
Howe'er seduc'd by these inferior flames;
The leading passion, the supreme desire,
To things divine and infinite aspire.
Eternal Excellence! 'tis only Thee
We search, through Nature's bright variety!
Our eager wishes, with impetuous force,
To thee, unknown, direct their endless course;
'Tis thee we seek and love, for thee we pine;
The powerful charm, the soft attraction's thine;
To thee these sighs, these tender vows ascend,
Th' unseen Divinity we still attend;
Sick of these fading toys, our thoughts press on
To joys untasted, excellence unknown.

Thou

Thou Great Original of all that's fair,
Whose glories no similitude can bear,
Before the darting splendour of thy eyes,
The pride of all created beauty dies!

This I hope is the latent ſenſe of my ſoul, in all its motions, though I am not yet ſo wiſe as you would have me; nor as I intend to be; but in whatever character you put me, do me the juſtice to believe I am ſincerely

Yours, &c.

LETICIA.





LETTER X.

From Lysander, *giving a relation of the tragical End of his* Valet de Chambre.

My Lord,

YOUR commands shall be punctually obeyed, whatever reluctance I find to enter on this relation, of which you have been so imperfectly informed.

The young *Valet de Chambre*, whose Story you enquire after, was the same I brought out of *France*, whom you took some notice of when I met your Lordship in my return to *England*; where I was received again into my Mother's family, my Father being in my absence deceased.

I had a young Sister about fifteen, of whom I was always exceeding fond, and now thought it my part to see her as advantageously married, as her birth and fortune required: After I had spent some time at home, I proposed several good matches for

her, every one of which ſhe obſtinately refuſed.

This gave me ſome ſuſpicion of my *Valet*, who appeared to be a handſome youth about eighteen: He had a charming voice, and ſung to a lute, which he touched with ſurprizing ſkill and ſweetneſs. My ſiſter loved muſick, and he was always ambitious of entertaining her. There was no difficulty to diſcover her inclinations; truth and nature appeared in all her actions; but *Palanty*'s conduct was paſt my penetration: However, I reſolved to part with him, to prevent my ſiſter's infamy; as diſſolute and abandoned as my own manners had been, I had the niceſt ſenſe of what would touch her reputation. With a reſtleſs mind I was one day walking in my garden, and, turning with ſome precipitation down a ſhady alley, I ſurprized *Palanty* reading a paper; which ſuddenly ſnatching from him, convinced me of my ſiſter's folly.

I took the opportunity immediately to diſmiſs him; and ſeeing me reſolved, he fell on his knees, intreating me not to expoſe a ſtranger in a foreign country; confeſſing the whole truth, that ſhe was an unhappy wo-

man, the Cardinal of *B*——'s niece, who, governed by the dictates of her affection, had followed me in that disguise.

This she told me with a face unstained with a rosy blush, or the least appearance of that modest disorder so natural and becoming her sex: My confusion was much greater than her's; and yet one would not think me over-bashful, nor extremely scrupulous, with regard to my character. Her impudence made me almost suspect the truth of what she had told me: But I was not in an inquisitive humour, and cared not what she was, if I had never been embarrassed with her: I had seen her face too often to find any charm of novelty in it; the passion she pretended for me was a mystery, when I remembered she had been without constraint a witness, as well as pimp, to many of my criminal amours.

However, as I was now without any anxiety for my sister, this artful woman, by her importunities, prevailed on my easy temper to let her stay in the family 'till she could find some other settlement. She staid; and in some moment of darkness seduced me to her ruin, and my own infamy: She was with child; I got lodgings for her, and,

and, pretending some disgust, dismissed her as a *Valet*; my mother and sister being intirely ignorant of the disguise of her sex.

In the mean time, my mother, who took the chagrin of my temper for a reformation of manners, was very solicitous with me to conclude a marriage she had proposed to a young woman of great merit, and a very agreeable person. I pursued the affair but coldly, and in mere complaisance to a most indulgent parent; 'till by frequent conversation with this charming woman, she engaged me by all the ties of reason and virtuous love: The modesty of her behaviour, joined to the most sincere and obliging temper in the world, secured her empire; her wit was sparkling and inoffensive; deceit and malice were strangers to her breast; a thousand nameless beauties appeared in all her conduct: 'Till now I never knew the force of love, nor any of the refined sentiments that noble passion inspired. In what guiltless joys did the hours pass that I spent with my loved *Cimene!*

But what tongue can express the anguish I felt from my criminal affair with

Palanty!

Palanty! I was forced to viſit her, for fear ſhe ſhould divulge the ſecret, in revenge, and ruin me with the charming *Cimene*. You are a ſtranger, my Lord, to theſe vexations; your whole conduct has been governed by the rules of honour and reaſon: Oh may my worſt enemy never know the curſe of an engagement with a lewd, imperious woman! Fear kept me a ſlave to her caprice, and forced me to endure all the inſolence, and rage of language, ſhe had practiſed in her maſculine habit among her inferiors; nor durſt I offer to controul her expenſive vanity, being willing to ſoften her, 'till ſhe was paſt the dangerous ſtate ſhe was now in.

But no conſideration could make me delay my intended marriage, let the event be what it would; the day was ſet that Heaven, in *Cimene*, gave me the greateſt bleſſing of my life: The news was ſoon ſpread, and reached *Palanty*'s ears; who procured a deadly ſleeping draught, and, unſuſpected by thoſe about her, deſperately ſwallowed it, and ſlept her laſt; leaving a paper on her toilet, with an account who ſhe was, and her adventure with me.

This

This accident was ſoon told to my mother; who was loſt in ſorrow, 'till I aſſured her, *Palanty* had impoſed on my ignorance by her habit, until a few months before I diſmiſſed her; and that, by her artifice, and not my own inclination, I had been enſnared into this misfortune: As much a rake as I had been, I could not but have a ſecret averſion to a woman of that diſſolute character. But the infamy of this tragical event has juſtly fallen on me, ſince in all my other intrigues I had been the ſeducer, and too often triumphed in the ſpoils of unguarded innocence.

The lovely *Cimene*, to whom I had been but two days married, inſtead of betraying any female weakneſs, with peace in her looks, and perſuaſion in her tongue, endeavoured to compoſe the grief and diſtraction with which ſhe found this infamous event had filled my thoughts. In her calm and unruffled temper I ſaw the privilege of a ſpotleſs life, and a mind unclouded with guilt, free from uneaſy reflections on what was paſt, or reſtleſs expectations of what was to come.

This

This was juſt the reverſe of my condition; the unhappy end of this miſerable woman, the double murder of herſelf and unborn infant, the ſhare I had in her misfortunes, has brought my former crimes in the blackeſt ſhape to my remembrance:

'Tis conſcious guilt's the emphaſis of hell,
We're all but fables, elſe, the prieſthood tell.

Like furies, the ghoſts of my paſt ſins ſtart up and terrify my reſtleſs imagination; my debauches, quarrels, licentious amours, paſs in a confuſed ſucceſſion before me: This is what ſecretly blaſts my joys, when to the world they appear in their full bloom.

It is not a month ſince my ſofteſt wiſhes were crowned in the poſſeſſion of the charming *Cimene*; I am yet ſurrounded with the congratulations of my friends on the happy occaſion; every other circumſtance of life ſeems to conſpire to my ſatisfaction. You will aſk me, my Lord, why I am not eaſy and thankful in this circle of earthly enjoyments? What is the hindrance? Where is the obſtacle?

It is guilt! it is conscious guilt! What was the matter with the first bold transgressor? Why did he run to the thickets to cover him? Why shelter himself among the trees of *Eden?* What could make him fly that gracious presence, at which innocent nature smiled, the new creation bloomed afresh, and the morning stars rejoiced? Why is he fearful in the cool of the evening, who at the dawning of the same day knew no such passion? What has made this sudden alteration? Some mighty change must be within, for all without is the same. Is he not in Paradise, surrounded with all the pleasures of sense? The warbling musick of the groves delight his ear: To charm his sight, the gay creation unfolds its various beauties; the flowers breathe ambrosial fragrance to chear him, the balmy air is yet unruffled by tempests, the sun shines in its original splendour, and nature stands dressed in all her primæval perfection! The man is an exact temperament formed for immortality, and just warm from his great Creator's hands, from whom, with all amazement, now he flies, and seeks the covert of the woods for shelter.

This

This was all the effect of guilt, that secret wound that bleeds within! You will excuse my dwelling so long on this melancholy theme, when I tell you, it is some relief to that anguish which is a secret to all the world but your Lordship: I am well acquainted with your compassion and fidelity, and am going to make a farther trial of them, by a relation which will surprize you. I will not exact your belief, nor enter into the reason and philosophy of it; nor will I presume to contradict it, should you tell me I am distracted; that all I am going to discover, is the effect of frenzy: As it was but a momentary appearance, I will assert nothing: But as I was indulging my melancholy temper, in the retreat of a summer-house, sitting very late in a pensive posture, leaning on a table, a pale sulphureous gleam of light appeared, and seemed to hover round a form resembling *Palanty*'s; who, with a rueful aspect, dressed in the habiliments of the dead, stood before me, and, with an air of unutterable anguish, laid this letter on the table by me, and immediately vanished. I should think this no more than a dream, if the paper

paper had not been real. The dreadful contents are as follow*:

To LYSANDER.

I am convinced, by a terrible demonstration, of those truths I once denied; to my cost, I find, that Hell is no poetick fiction, no enthusiastick dream, nor pious fable of some mercenary priest: This was the language of my impiety, when I followed you in an impudent disguise; and, to support my masculine character, acted the Atheist, by ridiculing all that was sacred, 'till I was given up of Heaven to the strongest delusion, and the most daring infidelity.

Thus abandoned, I swallowed the deadly potion, with a full presumption of mingling with my native dust, and being insensible for ever: But the instant Death had closed my eyes, and laid his icy hand on my heart, a scene altogether new and surprizing opened before me; the just unembodied soul, in the height of astonishment, would fain have shrunk back again into it's late warm habitation, from whence I had violently forced it; the attempt was vain; the avenues of mortal life were for ever shut, and I found myself the derision of those malig-

nant Spirits, who had been my seducers to this unnatural fact.

What execrations did I not utter against myself and them! I had indulged the rage, and practised the language of Hell in my mortal state; but here all was fruitless and unfeared; I was the captive of those infernal ministers, who waited to conduct me to the frontiers of eternal night: I cast my eyes to the heavenly luminaries, and the full blazing sun, whose light I was to lose for ever; I bid adieu to the fair creation, whose Almighty Former I had denied; I cast my eyes to the sparkling gates of bliss, and with infinite anguish found them shut against me; and hurried far thro' chaos, and primeval darkness, (far from the limits of celestial day) I reached my destined habitation; a dismal region, waste and wide, of which no mortal can form a conception, nor find a name for half its terrors.

Oh! fly the paths that lead to these mournful abodes. As I have been in my mortal state, the instrument of Hell to intice you to sin, your perdition would vastly aggravate my own misery, and I am suffered to warn you, as the rich libertine in the Gospel would have warned his brethren, that you come not to this place of torment.

I must

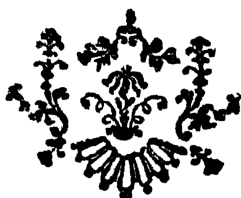
I must no farther reveal the secrets of the deep, but am commanded back to the seats of impenetrable night, and endless despair!

PALANTY.

That this letter was left on the table, writ in a character exactly like *Palanty*'s, is fact: Whether the rest was real or imaginary, I dare not decide.

Your Lordship's, &c.

LYSANDER.





LETTER XI.

Letter *the Second, To my Lord* ——, *from* LYSANDER.

My LORD,

YOU are intirely at your liberty to reject the relation I sent you: I never intended to make your belief in ghosts and apparitions a test of your Christianity; that stands on a more sure foundation, and has all the evidence of reason and miracles to support it: I am an instance of its divine power, by which I am transformed from the brutal to the human nature: I can now glory in that privilege I lately despised, and, without vanity, claim the dignity of a reasonable creature.

My penitence was sincere, and found acceptance from Heaven: The sacred illumination scattered the gloom of guilt and despair, while in gentle whispers the Eternal Spirit breathed pardon, peace, and heavenly benedictions

dictions to my soul; I felt the powerful influence, the flames of celestial love were kindled, my fears vanished like clouds before the morning Sun.

"All hail, (I cried) ye unknown delights, "ye unexperienced pleasures! Compared "to you, what are my past enjoyments! "What are all the amusements of sense! "I never lived 'till now; I knew no more "than the name, the shadow of happiness; "but now I wake to life, and taste the joys "of Angels."

I hope, my Lord, you will not think these the flights of imagination: You that have always believed the articles of religion, and kept its bright rewards in view, can reflect on such subjects more calmly; but to me these glorious truths are all novelty and surprize: If a wretch from his infancy had been kept in a gloomy dungeon, and just delivered from that dark confinement, with what transports would he salute the great luminaries of Heaven, while one that from his birth had been blessed with their beams would meet them without emotion!

These important subjects engage my whole attention; the creation wears new beau-

ties; where-ever I caſt my eyes, I meet impreſſions of the Divinity; I trace his footſteps among the ſilver rills, and invoke him in the ſilent grove: You know my poetick humour, by too many looſe compoſures; but my muſe is now conſecrated, and in ſome ſylvan retreat often aſſiſts my evening devotion.

Permit, me, my Lord, to repeat my laſt invocation to the heavenly Power.

Deſcend, celeſtial Spirit, from above,
The uncreated ſource of light and love!
Perpetual calms, and ſweet ſecurity,
Concord, and graceful order, wait on thee;
Decay, and Death, thy quick'ning rays exclude,
And ſpringing nature ſmiles, by thee renew'd,
Darkneſs, and wild confuſion, ſoon retire
Before thy clear, illuminating fire;
To gentle thoughts thou doſt our boſoms move,
And breath'ſt the ſoft melodious ſoul of love.

O Thou! who mad'ſt the new creation bloom
With active life, and quick'ning virtue, come!
Come, like the ſilent fall of ev'ning dews,
Whoſe moiſture all the flow'ry field renews;
Breathe on me, like the ſweet Sabean gale,
That fans with roſy wings the verdant dale;
Smooth

Smooth as the gliding musick, that controuls
Each human care, and steals upon our souls;
In triumph, with the heav'nly train descend,
Of loves and graces, which on thee attend!

In silent shades, by some clear fountain's fall;
Thou oft hast answer'd to a mortal's call;
Oft in some artless cave, or humble cell,
Thou with the sons of men hast deign'd to dwell,
And left behind the high celestial seats,
To visit mortals in their low retreats.
When holy vows thy kind descent invite,
Thou hear'st the gentle whispers with delight;
While nature tir'd her midnight sabbath keeps,
And ev'ry thought, but pure devotion, sleeps.
The smiling stars roll on, the dazzling moon
In pomp advances to her silent noon;
While thy sweet voice, soft as the midnight air,
Dispels the gloom of ev'ry earthly care,
Unfolding boundless prospects of delight,
Before the piercing, intellectual sight.

Beneath the sacred mount, by thee inspir'd,
The Hebrews *glorious Leader sat retir'd;*
The new-made world, and Eden'*s blooming pride,*
In various scenes before him lay descry'd.

O princely swain, how didst thou then despise
*Th'*Egyptian *court, how worthless in thy eyes!*

 What

What were the grandeurs of a royal fate,
To the distinctions of thy present state!
While Paradise, in all it's charming views,
For thee, the great creating voice renews;
For thee, again, the morning stars rejoice;
Again, for thee, they raise the tuneful voice;
The sons of God touch the melodious lyre,
And all the wide creation join the choir.

Lead me, propitious Spirit, lead me far,
Where I no more the voice of man may hear;
Then charming Visions, how you fire my soul,
And ev'ry thought of earthly things controul!
Thro' what enchanting paths, what flow'ry ways,
My fancy led, with boundless freedom, strays!
Reveal'd the avenues of pleasure lie,
And open wide the crystal portals fly;
Immortal beauty smiles, angelick pow'rs,
In soft responses sing from rosy bow'rs.

You will not blame me, being got here, if I have no inclination to descend: But mortality will prevail; I sink to my native element again; where, as long as I am confined, believe me to be

Your Lordship's
Most obliged humble Servant,

LYSANDER.



LETTER XII.

The Sequel of the Story of ROSELLA, *in the last Letter of the First Part of* Letters Moral *and* Entertaining.

WHEN I was in the Weſt, four years ſince, I wrote you word, that I had made an acquaintance in a family, who lived in a little retirement at the foot of a hill, a few miles from my houſe. I then gave you an account of the piety and beauty of thoſe exemplary recluſes, and owned, that I had not at that time forgot the charms of *Meliſſa*; but I did not tell you, that they had made an impreſſion on me, which could never be eraſed by all the modiſh ſchemes of intereſt and alliances; nor could that darling (but miſtaken) notion of liberty hold me out againſt the deſire I had to call her mine, and make her ſo by the ſtrongeſt and happieſt ties, thoſe of marriage: I ſtruggled with my own heart, and would fain have terrified it, by the laugh I ſhould raiſe

among my acquaintance, when they heard that I, in the gayeſt bloom of life, and with four thouſand pounds a year at my command, ſhould leave all the faſhionable maxims of mankind, and fall in love with a young woman, who had only beauty, and the ſanctity of her manners, to recommend her: For though her birth is noble, ſhe has only three thouſand pounds, which I deſign to preſent to *Honoria* her mother, the day after our marriage, which will be ſolemnized as ſoon as my lawyer can finiſh a deed; by which I give *Meliſſa* a thouſand pounds a year rent-charge for her life, in caſe ſhe ſhould ſurvive me.

Now I have told you my happineſs, I cannot help making you acquainted with *Roſella*'s, whoſe ſtory, you often ſaid, touched you. I went to the houſe of *Honoria*, the day after I came hither (for now it was my only buſineſs;) as ſoon as I alighted, a clean footman, in a frock turned up with green, took my horſe: I expected from this to find an alteration in the family (for when I was there firſt, they had no livery-ſervant.) As ſoon as I came into the hall, I ſaw a beautiful young man, whoſe dreſs was intirely plain; his hair

hung

hung in natural curls without any powder, and his air and appearance seemed to suit with the simplicity and elegance of the other inhabitants of that happy dwelling. *Rosella* was sitting by a table, and had a boy of about fourteen months old in her lap, rosy and smiling as a Cherubim, who was playing with some flowers with which *Melissa* was going to dress a bason. *Rosella* immediately rose, and coming towards me, desired I would give her leave to present her husband *Alonzo* to me. I was rejoiced at the sound, and congratulated her upon the change of her fortune, in a manner that might convince her how sincerely I shared in all that related to her. The lovely *Melissa* seemed glad to see me, and ran to call *Honoria* with an obliging haste. After a few compliments were over, I enquired what had produced the Alteration I saw. *Honoria* told me, that about two years and a half ago, *Alonzo*'s Father fell dangerously ill, and that he expressed an ardent desire to see his son; upon which his wife wrote to a nephew she had in *London*, (who was the most intimate friend *Alonzo* had upon earth) in hopes that he might possibly be acquainted with the place

of his retreat; and begged of him, if he knew how to direct a letter, that he would write, and desire him to come and see his dying Father. The Nephew immediately dispatched an express to *Alonzo*, who was retired into a little village in *Lancashire*, where he boarded in the house of an old Clergyman, who had no other family than himself and his wife, and who were glad to have *Alonzo* with them, as he appeared a modest, sober young man; for their circumstances were too plentiful to want the advantage of a boarder. He immediately left the old people, and came home about four days before the death of his father, who was transported at the sight of him; nor did he feel less joy, when his Mother assured him, that *Montanor* (for that was his Father's name) had, for many months before his illness, lived a very penitent, regular life.

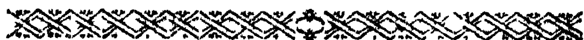
As soon as I heard of *Alonzo*'s return, I wrote him a letter, in which I desired to see him as soon as *Montanor*'s funeral was over, but forbad him to come till that time; he complied with me in that request, as he has ever since done, in all that I desired of him. About six weeks after *Rosella* and he were

married,

married, I begged him to let me enjoy the company of my daughter while I lived in this ſolitary habitation; for I could not think of leaving it; and we have paſſed our time ever ſince in the moſt perfect harmony. I cannot deny him the juſtice of acknowledging to his face, that we are not only happier in our retirement than we were before, by the addition of a chearful companion, but edified and improved by the piety of his life. *Alonzo* ſeemed out of countenance at this part of her diſcourſe; and the modeſty with which he received it, ſhewed how much he deſerved the praiſe ſhe gave him. She continued to tell me, that about four months after he married *Roſella*, he received a letter from the lawyer in the village where he had boarded, to let him know, that a few weeks ago the clergyman, with whom he had lived, had buried his wife, and about a fortnight after fell ill himſelf of the ſame fever, and died; that he had by his will left *Alonzo* his eſtate, which was about an hundred and eighty pounds a year; and two thouſand pounds in money; which, added to about two hundred and fifty pounds a year, and ſome money which his father left him, makes their fortune very eaſy.

Here *Honoria* ended her diſcourſe, and it was ſo late, that they deſired me to ſtay dinner; after which I aſked to ſpeak with her alone, and told her, I begged I might have leave to propoſe myſelf to *Meliſſa*, if her heart was not already engaged. *Honoria* aſſured me it was not, and ſeemed ſurprized at a propoſal ſo much to *Meliſſa*'s advantage; but told me, ſhe begged I would endeavour to get *Meliſſa*'s conſent without her interpoſing her authority; ſince ſhe could not reſolve, even in ſo advantageous a thing, to force her inclination. When I named it to the young beauty, ſhe did not at firſt ſeem averſe to any thing, but the leaving of her mother, which the ſmallneſs of her houſe would oblige her to: But after a few days, the nearneſs of my houſe reconciled her to that ſcruple; and I had the joy to find, that inclination had a greater ſhare than intereſt in her compliance. Rejoice with me, *Lyſander*; my happineſs in your alliance will not end at my death; the converſation I ſhall now enjoy, will fit me for eternal rewards. I will make no apology to you for the ſallies of my pleaſure, which will let me talk to you of nothing but my own affairs.

Adieu.



LETTER XIII.

To SERENA.

My dear SERENA,

AS I have always made you the confident of whatever has related to me, I cannot help giving you an account of the pleasure and pain occasioned by an acquaintance I have made with a young woman since I came hither: She was only daughter to a man who had been formerly an officer in the *English* army; but quitted it in discontent, and came hither with *Semanthe* his daughter, to treat with some people about a project of working in some mines, which are believed to have many large veins of silver in them.

Semanthe came to see me upon my arrival; I found so much wit and good-nature in her conversation, that we contracted a great intimacy, and were continually together: She had every qualification that could make her

her company entertaining; ſhe ſung, play-ed on the harpſichord, painted in water-colours, and had a ſurprizing genius for poetry; her ſentiments on all ſubjects ſeemed juſt and noble: I thought myſelf the happieſt perſon in the world, in finding a companion ſo inſtructive and agreeable.

She told me the ſtory of her paſt life; which, deſcribed in her charming language, ſtill raiſed my eſteem; in every occurrence I had the pleaſure to find ſhe practiſed the higheſt rules of juſtice and benevolence; and though now in the early part of her life, ſhe was guided by the niceſt rules of virtue: By a paſſion ſhe had for a perſon by whom ſhe was equally beloved, I was confirmed of the prudence of her conduct; I found that no partiality or tenderneſs could tempt her to deviate from the ſevereſt principles of modeſty and honour.

I was not at reſt till I had poured out all the ſecrets of my heart to her; which I did without the leaſt reſerve; and truſted her with a ſecret of the greateſt importance to my future tranquillity—But what is human dependence?—I found the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul betrayed, by the perſon in whom

I had ſo entirely confided—I knew not how to behave myſelf in this perplexity—I had too much compaſſion for my fallen friend to give her the pain and confuſion of hearing my reproaches; and too much ſincerity, to continue my intimacy with her: But for my own ſecurity, I was forced to break off all further commerce with one, of whoſe guilt I had the utmoſt certainty.

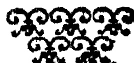
This is a very ſenſible affliction to me in a place where I have ſo few acquaintance; and am not in a temper to contract any new friendſhip. I could as ſoon have queſtioned my own exiſtence, as *Semanthe*'s truth; and now, tho' I cannot acquit her, I am perpetually endeavouring to mitigate her crime: I tell my heart, her error did not proceed from any malignity in her nature, but a too great confidence in ſome other friend; that ſhe, as well as I, has been deceived, and only told my ſecrets where ſhe thought ſhe might ſafely have truſted her own: I am ready to melt into tears whenever I think of her, and find more compaſſion than anger, on reflecting on her conduct; though I no longer converſe with her, it is more to make her ſenſible of her

guilt, in betraying a truſt of importance, than to ſhew my own reſentment; I ſhall be for ever intereſted in her welfare: And if my prayers have any force, ſhe will live to wear off every failing, that can caſt a blemiſh on a mind capable of arriving at as great a degree of perfection as human nature is capable of.

I have wrote myſelf into too melancholy a humour, to ſay any more, but that I am

Yours,

ISABELLA.





LETTER XIV.

From MELINDA, *giving an Account of her Concealment.*

My dear ORIANA,

I Told you before I left my brother's houſe, that you ſhould hear from me as ſoon as I was ſettled; and that I would inform you of the reaſon of my flight: You have too much candour and charity to judge harſhly of my proceedings; which, could you ſee my heart, you would rather pity, than condemn me for.

You have often, within theſe two laſt years, obſerved an alteration in my temper and perſon: I am no more the ſprightly florid creature, that you uſed to call the emblem of health and chearfulneſs; you ſaw the change, but did not gueſs the cauſe was a ſecret, hopeleſs paſſion. I was at a play; I ſaw there one of the moſt agreeable perſons in the world: His dreſs, his behaviour, every thing was graceful and eaſy:

The

The tragedy of *Cato* was acted; he was attentive, and seemed to enter into every sentiment, where either the hero or lover was described: His aspect wore the visible characters of fortitude and virtue: He stood up between the acts, and turned towards the box where I sat, and when I went out, he made way for me through the crowd: But I never after saw him in any publick place, nor knew who nor what he was: But the charming youth had made an impression on my thoughts, which had soon a very happy effect: I grew weary of the noisy tumultuous way of living in my brother's house; and refused sharing in the constant round of diversions that my sister loved; nor could there be any thing more dissolute and extravagant, than the manners of this family: Assemblies, balls, gaming——all sorts of riots and licentiousness: I never indeed approved these entertainments, and was always uneasy, without knowing how to make myself otherwise.

The paths to happiness, that religion proposed, I was as ignorant of, as the savage *Americans*, in their native groves. *Dumain*, who married my sister, was a professed libertine:

beitine: My parents left me very young to their care, my ſiſter being many years older than I am: And if my godfathers and godmothers, inſtead of renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world for me in my baptiſm, had ſolemnly vowed I ſhould be bred in the midſt of thoſe ſnares, and ſeducing temptations, they could not more effectually have diſcharged their truſt, than by placing me in this family; whoſe *Sunday*'s amuſement was cards: For we never went to church, unleſs in a frolick to ſpend an idle hour, in whiſpering or laughing.

However, my guardian angel did not quit his charge; but by the impreſſion of a virtuous love, fortified my ſoul from every looſe inclination; I fled diverſions, grew fond of retirement; this ſoon gave me a habit of thinking: And if I had ſchemes of happineſs, they were all in ſome future life beyond the grave; but my notions were clouded and imperfect: Indeed I believed there was a God, and the reproaches of my own reaſon taught me to fear him; but I had never looked in the Bible, ſince I learned to read; and was as ignorant of Chriſtianity, as a young *Hottentot* bred in a cave.

My

My penſive temper now deteſted vanity, in every appearance; plays and novels no more diverted me: But wanting ſomething to read, I ſaw a Bible in the room, where my ſiſter's woman lay; and opening it, my attention was immediately engaged. The hiſtory was new to me: I carried it to my chamber; but how was I ſurprized, to find the life and precepts of the great founder of the Chriſtian Faith ſo different from the manners and principles of thoſe who aſſumed that ſacred profeſſion! I found myſelf in the flowery paths of ruin, nor knew how to extricate myſelf from the fatal ſnare: This was the ſecret language of my ſoul, to that inviſible power which knew it's ſincerity.

Thou Ruler of the ſky, almighty Name,
Whoſe piercing eye diſcerns my riſing thoughts,
Ere they are form'd within my anxious breaſt;
Thou ſeeſt my ſoul ſtruggling to break the bands,
Which thus detain her captive to the earth:
Thou ſeeſt how vainly ſhe would ſoar on high,
Paſſion and pleaſure clog her downy wing,
Prevent her flight, and ſink her to the duſt:

There

There low she lies, and trembling begs thy aid,
Conscious how impotent she is without Thee.

My sister soon perceived the alteration of my temper, and used her art to engage me in some criminal diversion; but in vain; I was sick and tired of these extravagancies. But what could I do? my fortune was lost in the *South-Sea*; I was dependent on *Dumain*'s and my sister's charity; and to heighten my distress, I was importuned by my Lord—— (who was lately married) to yield to his criminal passion. At this proposal I started with horror, but could not shun his address without quitting this disorderly family; which I resolved to do, and cast myself on the protection of Heaven.

I left my brother's house just after dinner, and went in a hackney-coach to a woman in the city that had been my nurse: I engaged her to secrecy, and got her to enquire for a place in some merchant's family; she soon succeeded, and introduced me to the wife of an *East-India* merchant, who lived in great splendour. My business was to wait on her in the station of a chambermaid: She was very handsome, modest, and un-

unaffected: The orders of the family were ſo regular and peaceful, ſo perfectly the reverſe of my brother's, that I thought myſelf in another world, and among a new ſet of beings: Temperance and ſobriety reigned amidſt the height of plenty and liberality. The rooms were noble, and furniſhed with all the riches of the *Indian* world, and looked like the palace of ſome eaſtern monarch.

I found myſelf perfectly at eaſe; dreſſing my miſtreſs was all I had to do; which was a very agreeable employment, and ſoon diſpatched: She had ſomething ſo genteel in her manner, that every thing looked graceful and becoming her, and coſt but little trouble to make it ſit well. Her converſation was innocent and inſtructive; her hours ſpent in reading, or ſome little amuſement with her needle, without the leaſt inclination to rambling after balls or maſquerades.

I ſpent two or three weeks in this regular manner, my miſtreſs treating me almoſt on a level. I had not yet ſeen my maſter, who now returned from his country-houſe; but, my dear *Oriana*, think what was my affliction, when I diſcovered that he was

the

the same lovely youth I had seen at the play. As soon as he saw me, he turned as red as crimson, and I as pale as ashes: He passed by me, and went immediately into my mistress's room. It was almost two years since I had seen him, and I had some hopes I was forgot; however, I resolved to quit the family, if I found he knew me, or that my friendship for his wife did not extinguish my passion.——On my master's part, I soon found reason to be easy. I hardly ever saw him; he was either at the *Exchange*, or, when at home, engaged in a series of beneficent actions. His wealth was immense, which he dispersed with an unequalled generosity: He assisted honest traders, that had but a small stock, paid the debts of prisoners, relieved the widow, and redressed the injured and oppressed: This was every day's business, which yet never intrenched on his hours of devotion, in private or publick.

I now grew easy; a man of this character was not like to indulge a guilty flame in his own breast, or to flatter it in mine; besides, his absence would soon relieve me; for he intended to go to the *Indies* with

the fleet, which was to set sail within a month.

The time was now expired; the day before he went his voyage, after he had been an hour with my mistress, in some private conversation, he left her, and came directly into my room, with such an air of benignity in his face, as some heavenly minister would wear, who brought a message of peace.

He begun: "You will be surprized, Ma-"dam, to find I know your family, and the "reason you have put yourself into the pro-"tection of mine: The first sight I had of "you at the play, made an impression, which "was never effaced, 'till I gave my vows to "the best of wives: it is with some confusion "I own the wrong I did your virtue, when I "tell you nothing should have prevented my "pursuit of the passion you first raised, but "the scandal of the house you was in; which "was so extravagant, that it forbad me ever "thinking of you; but I now do you intire "justice, and admire that triumph of ho-"nour, that put you in a station so low, to "secure yourself from the temptation of re-"turning to your brother: I have left you

"ten

"ten thousand pounds in Bank bills, and "have told your case (as I had it from the "woman that nursed you) to my wife, who "has all the virtues that ever adorned the "sex: She yielded to this proposal with trans- "port; and waits while I am gone to deli- "ver the bills." He said this, and left me without time or language to speak my gratitude.

My mistress immediately came into the chamber, with goodness shining in her eyes, and gave me the Bank Bills, with a grace, which only virtue can stamp on human actions. She prevented my thanks, by making an apology for her ignorance of my quality, assuring me, the house was intirely at my command: And that the hopes of my staying with her, was the greatest satisfaction she proposed in her dear *Henry*'s absence. I could not possibly discover my sense of this surprizing benefit, by all the force of language.—My silence, and the tenderness into which she saw my soul was melted, was the only evidence of gratitude I could now give.

In the morning, when every thing was ready for the parting of the *East-India* fleet, my generous benefactor came into his wife's

chamber, to take his laſt adieu: I was with her, endeavouring to give that conſolation myſelf wanted: Her grief drew ſome reluctant tears from him, while he endeavoured to conceal the inward anguiſh: the hero and the lover appeared in his behaviour. And when to excuſe the intemperance of her ſorrow, his wife urged the dangers of the ſeas, and the rage of barbarous nations on the ſhore; I ſhall never forget with what an air of greatneſs he replied; *Je crains Dieu, & je n'ai point d'autre crainte*—"I fear God, and "I have no other fear." Thus undaunted would the Godlike man have appeared, had he ſeen the ſtars falling from their orbs, and heard the ſound of the laſt thunders. When he had, with an apparent regret, freed himſelf from the embraces of his wife, with a look of compaſſion, like that of ſome pitying Angel, he bid me farewel. His domeſticks were loſt in grief; the paſſage from his houſe was crouded with his grateful dependents, whoſe wrongs or neceſſities had been redreſſed by him: A thouſand ardent prayers for his proſperity reached the ſkies, and gained the divine aſſent; while he haſted through the admiring throng, diſtreſſed with the popular applauſe.

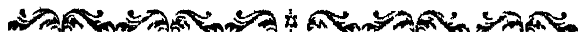
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How poor a figure is that of a libertine, in his most glittering heights of vanity, compared to this great man, who has so early begun his race of glory, and is in the very bloom of youth mature in every virtue! Instead of passing his hours in a train of idle amusements, the gay part of his life is devoted to Heaven, and the publick welfare. —You know where to find

Your humble Servant,

MELINDA.





LETTER XV.

To EUSEBIUS.

AS my reformation is partly owing to that exalted notion of virtue your example gave me, it is one of the greatest satisfactions I have, to express the sense of that immense obligation, by unfolding the most secret recesses of my soul to you.

I cannot but communicate my content, while every view my thoughts take, heightens my happiness: I look back on the stormy ocean, the tumult and perplexity of my life past, and bless the gracious power that saved me on the very edge of perdition; when I look forward, my expectations are all bright and unbounded.

I bid my soul take it's ease, banish every care, and act, without restraint, the glorious prodigal. I survey my vast possession, lose my wishes in endless plenty, and give up all my powers

powers to indolence and joy. I look to the stars, count the heavenly glories, and call the treasures of eternity my own.

Let chaos come again; be the gay creation lost in darkness, and the fair face of nature become an universal blank: Let her beauties fade, and those divine characters she wears be effaced, I shall yet be happy, when the groves shall no more renew their verdure; nor the valleys boast their flowery pride – when the sun is extinguished in the skies, and all the æthereal lamps have burnt out their golden flames—— when the commissioned angel shall lift his hand on high, and swear by the unutterable name—That time shall be no more ——when these transitory images of things for ever take their flight; I shall explore the worlds of life and pleasure, and triumph in the plenitude of bliss.

Then shall the celestial *arcana* be unveiled, and the Heaven of Heavens disclose their glories; the ineffable Divinity shall shew the milder beauties of his face, and manifest as much of his excellence, as created intellects can support: But what angel's wing has measured the height of his throne? Who has entered those sacred recesses, where he

dwells in himself, possessed of unbounded bliss? Has the ocean of joy been fathomed, or the limits of independent felicity described? Who has found access to the inmost habitations of the most High, and gazed on essential glory, before whose fainter emanations the angelick splendours are eclipsed, the thrones and principalities of light disappear?

What path is found to those sublime retreats,
Where pleasure banquets in its royal seats,
Where beauty triumphs in her native bow'r,
Uncopy'd yet by the creating pow'r?
Ten thousand various forms, divinely fair,
Sparkle in their supreme ideas there;
While wisdom, with superior order, shines
In boundless schemes, and infinite designs:
Wond'rous the prospect, clear, and unconfin'd,
But open only to th' Eternal Mind.

What tow'ring intellect, with daring flight,
Has made excursion thro' these realms of light;
The blest recesses, where th' approachless God,
From all duration, made his high abode?

Who-

Whoe'er has mark'd with bold enquiring eyes,
From whence the secret springs of life arise?
How from their deep exhaustless source they flow,
To actuate heav'n, and chear the world below?

Those dazzling habitations who has found,
Where Love, in all his heav'nly charms, sits crown'd?
Great Love, th' Almighty Father's first delight:
His image, and the darling of his sight?
The full resemblance of the Deity,
Who all his glorious image stampt on thee:
'Twas thou, who didst his boundless thoughts employ,
His self-complacence, his peculiar joy,
From ages unbegun:—— But who can tell
Thy generation, and thy birth reveal?
What thought can measure back the long extent
Of nameless times, and speak thy great descent?

Before the hills appear'd, or fountains flow'd,
Or golden flames in the blue æther glow'd;
Before the vast creation had a name,
Thou wast in bliss and dignity the same:
By Thee the sun, by Thee the stars, were made;
The spacious skies at thy command, were spread:

The heav'n of heav'ns, the empyrean coasts,
Were form'd by Thee, with all their num'rous hosts;
Angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, pow'rs,
Who sing thy conquests in th' immortal bow'rs.
For thou dost ev'ry heav'nly breast inflame,
And loud Victorias *answer to thy Name:*
Their beings and their bliss they own to Thee,
Thou equal offspring of the Deity!
His perfect image Thou dost justly prove;
For all the bright Divinity is Love.

You find, in whatever character I act, whether the saint or the libertine, *Love* is the animating motive, the leading principle: But how superior are my prospects! how glorious the hopes that now fire my soul, to the trifling ends I had lately in view! My desires terminate in nothing below infinite excellence, and unbounded felicity.

Adieu.



LETTER XVI.

The Story of OLINDA *and* SOPHRONIA.

[Translated from *Tasso's* JERUSALEM, Book II]

THE King was now with martial cares oppress'd,
When curs'd Ismenes *thus his Lord address'd:*
"*To share your fate, great Sir, I left my cell,*
"*And bring you all th' assisting force of hell:*
"*Th' infernal spirits, subject to my will,*
"*With eager speed my strict commands fulfill!*
"*By them inform'd, this method I propose,*
"*To guard the fortress, and insult your foes:*
"*Beneath a temple which the Christians own,*
"*Descends a Vault, to all, but them, unknown:*
"*Within the awful consecrated ground*
"*An Image of the Virgin Mother's found;*
"*Perpetual lamps before the wond'rous maid*
"*Are lighted up, and fragrant incense laid,*
"*This Statue, Sir, by your own hands convey'd*
"*From thence, must be in* Macon's *temple laid;*
"*Secur'd*

"*Secur'd by spells, while that does safe remain,*
"Godfrey *shall storm the fated town in vain.*"
This said, th'impatient king directs his pace,
With impious fury, to the holy place;
Nor to profane the sacred pavement fears,
But madly thence the beauteous Image bears:
Then in his god's polluted seat 'twas laid,
While o'er it ev'ry charm the Wizard said.
But when in heav'n the next gay morning shone,
It's guardian finds the sacred Treasurer gone;
Searches in vain; then with a thousand fears,
Distracted, to the court the tidings bears.
The Prince his Christian subjects first suspects,
And all his flaming rage at them directs:
But whether human hands the work had done,
Or pow'r divine, to men was yet unknown,
The curst enchanter mutters o'er his spells,
Yet nothing by the hellish art reveals;
Each house was ransack'd to it's last retreat,
But no success th' enrag'd enquirers meet.
"*'Tis then resolv'd,* the raving Monarch cries)
"*I'll doom them all one gen'ral sacrifice;*
"*The guiltless with th' unknown offender falls;*
"*A fact like this for speedy vengeance calls.*"
This cruel sentence reach'd the Christians ears:
Their sudden fate unusual horror wears;

No

No dawning hope of safety was in sight,
No method of defence, or secret flight:
Nor dare they mercy from the tyrant crave;
Their last and desp'rate refuge was the grave:
But Heav'n, which ne'er abandons the distress'd,
Provides them succour, where they hop'd it least.
A beauteous Virgin liv'd, but liv'd unknown,
Amidst the concourse of the noisy town;
A lively bloom adorn'd her charming face,
An artless softness, and persuasive grace:
To this advantage fav'ring Heav'n had join'd
The richer blessing of a noble mind.
With pious thoughts, and sacred zeal, inspir'd,
From all the world she would have liv'd retir'd;
But envious love the chaste design forbid,
Nor suffer'd so much merit to be hid.
A youthful vot'ry to her guiltless eyes,
His fatal pow'r had doom'd a sacrifice:
One creed, one holy faith they both confess'd,
In one pure form were both their pray'rs address'd;
The youth as modest, as his mistress fair,
With awful silence still conceal'd his care;
And still the lovely author of his pains,
A stranger to his am'rous grief remains;

His cares and services were all unpaid,
Nor once regarded by the wary maid.
The Christians danger now had reach'd her ears,
And fill'd her with a thousand growing fears:
At last, some gen'rous stratagem she sought,
How, by her own, their safety might be bought:
But shame, and female fear, th' attempt restrain,
And render all her great intentions vain;
Till bolder hope her first design renews,
Which bravely now the stedfast maid pursues.
She pass'd the crouded streets with sober pace,
Nor strove to veil, nor yet expose, her face;
Downward her eyes with modest looks incline,
And with some engaging coyness shine;
Her charming air, her easy mien, and dress,
Nor art, nor perfect negligence, confess:
Admir'd of all the thoughtful beauty pass'd,
And met the wild disorder'd King at last:
" *Great Sir,* (She then began) *the Christians*
" *spare,*
" *And I th' unknown offender will declare".*
A decent boldness lighten'd in her eyes,
Whose piercing lustre ev'ry heart surprize:
The vanquish'd Monarch stood confus'd and charm'd,
His visage alter'd, and his rage disarm'd:
Ev'n

Ev'n love had enter'd: But th' imperious fair
Attack'd his soul by methods too severe:
Not frowns, nor coy forbidding beauty move,
But gentle smiles indulge the flame of Love:
Yet, if not love, amazement and delight,
Her charms within his doubtful breast excite:
He paus'd, and thus——" Let me the secret
" share,
" *The people's lives, at thy request, I'll spare.*"
" *From first to last* (she cries) *the bold design;*
" *The great attempt and daring action's mine.*"
And thus by an heroical deceit,
Her life abandon'd for the publick fate.
Again enquir'd the yet suspending King,
" *Who was thy curs'd adviser in the thing?* "
Th' undaunted maid replies, " *The whole de-*
" *sign,*
" *Contriv'd, resolv'd, and executed, 's mine,*
" *The danger, the fatigue, was mine alone;*
" *The guilt and glory shall be all my own.*"
Enrag'd, the tyrant then replies,—" And all
" *My vengeance on thy wretched head shall*
" *fall.*"
" *'Tis just*, (she calmly said) *and I'm content;*
" *Th' illustrious action mine, mine be the pu-*
" *nishment;*

" But

"*But, Sir, your anxious searches are in vain*
"*The violated Image to regain;*
"*For nothing but it's ashes now remain;*
"*This way secur'd, that by no Pagan band*
"*The holy Shrine might be again profan'd:*
"*Demand no more, my Lord; enough is known;*
"*The action I both justify and own.*"
Her daring language, and relentless air,
No more the wild outrageous King could bear;
No more his swelling fury could restrain;
Her youth, her pow'rful beauty, plead in vain;
Nor interceding love his rigour tames;
The pity'd Virgin sentenc'd to the flames,
Whom thence (yet with compassion and remorse)
The murm'ring Pagans in a tumult force:
Her hands are bound, her modest face unveil'd,
No more it's charms from vulgar eyes conceal'd,
Tho' void of fear, her doubtful looks confess
A soft concern, and human tenderness:
The rosy blush, that from her visage flies,
Not paleness, but a snowy white supplies.
Meantime the wond'rous accident was known
From street to street, thro' all the swarming town:
The person doubtful, the relation true,
Among the rest, Olinda *thither drew:*

Too soon the wretched youth approach'd, and
found,
By impious hands, his charming mistress bound:
Distracted now among the guards he press'd,
And thus aloud th' astonish'd King address'd:
"*Ah! royal Sir, yourself no more deceive,*
"*Nor this fond maid's invented tale believe:*
"*Could she, alas! the cautious watch betray,*
"*And from it's seat the weighty Shrine convey?*
"*'Tis stolen all,---the enterprize was mine,*
"*Nor will I thus a glorious fate resign.*"
(He add) "*Your temple down a sloping way,*
"*Receives the light, and draws the beamy day;*
"*Through that I stole the sacred prize away:*
"*My Lord, the sentenc'd criminal you see;*
"*These chains, this cruel death, belongs to me.*"
"*And could not then a single life suffice,*
"*Unhappy youth?*" (*the fair* Sophronia *cries,*
"*With kindling love and pity in her eyes*)
"*What rage, what fury mov'd thee, to expose*
"*Thyself a victim to relentless foes?*
"*What tears, what mean reluctance, have I*
"*shown,*
"*That you believe I cannot die alone?*"

But nothing could her kind repulses gain;
Unshaken, still, his first designs remain:

With stedfast courage each despises life,
And long between them held the gen'rous strife;
Virtue, and mighty love, dispute the field,
And neither in the friendly contest yield.

The tyrant raves, nor longer now refrains,
But both one cruel punishment ordains:
Commission'd, soon the charming youth they bind
With heavy chains, and to the stake confin'd.

" *Are these* (he cries) *the fetters love pre-*
" *pares?*
" *This the reward of all my tender cares?*
" *With softer thoughts I fed my fond desires,*
" *And hop'd to meet thee in more gentle fires:*
" *Yet could I, falling in thy tender arms,*
" *Expire, my death had still a thousand charms;*
" *Could I receive thy parting sighs, and join,*
" *At the last fatal gasp, my lips with thine;*
" *Our souls united, then, to heav'n should fly,*
" *And I content, my charming fair, should die.*"
Far other cares (she mildly said) *than*
" *these,*
" Olinda, *should our serious minds possess:*
" *Lament thy sins, contemplate the reward*
" *For faith, and humble penitence, prepar'd:*
" *The palm, the starry crown, and martyr's due,*
" *With all the boundless raptures that ensue:*

" *Survey*

" Survey the Sun, survey the dazzling sky;
" To these blest regions we must shortly fly."
Of gods and men the Pagans murmur'd loud,
The Christians, silent, weep among the croud.
The King, nor could his pity be disguis'd,
A strange unusual tenderness surpriz'd;
He durst no more the moving object view;
But fix'd, and scorning to relent, withdrew:
Sophronia, *unconcern'd, alone appears,*
Nor in the universal sorrow shares.
The mournful officers had plac'd the while,
And now were lighting up, the smoaky pile;
When a young champion, with a martial grace,
And lofty mien, approach'd the fatal place;
A tigress on her plumy helmet shone,
Which for the fair Clarinda, *made her known:*
Her sex's nicer ornaments she fled,
In toilsome arms, to great atchievements bred:
Her hands the labour of the loom refuse,
Nor in a closet could her mind amuse;
But o'er the Fields, in savage spoils array'd,
Or thro' the woods, with fearless thoughts, she stray'd:
When yet a child, the fi'ry steed she rein'd,
Challeng'd the race, or wrestled on the sand;
Vast desarts, hills, and pathless wilds she trac'd,
When with her spear the foaming boar she chas'd.

From

From Perſia *now the blooming warrior came,*
To win new trophies of immortal fame;
In battles paſt her ſword had oft compell'd
The ſcatter'd Gauls *to quit the bloody field:*
Majeſtick charms, which ev'ry heart ſurprize,
And awful glories, ſparkle in her eyes.

Arriving here, prepar'd for death, ſhe found
The tender youth, and lovely virgin bound:
The feeble ſex to heav'n her eyes addreſs'd,
And in her looks a ſilent calm expreſs'd;
The other grieves, and melts in pitying tears,
Not for his own unhappy fate, but her's.
The warlike nymph for both compaſſion proves,
But moſt her care the ſilent ſuff'rer moves:
She to the people turns, nor loſes time,
Demands with haſte, and hears in brief their crime:
Intreats the execution they'd delay,
And helps herſelf the riſing flames to ſtay;
Then charg'd---" Let none this office undertake,
" 'Till from the King I ſend them orders back."

Her bold commands the willing croud obey:
She, to the court directed, ſpeeds away,
And audience gain'd, begins; " Great Prince, " from far
" Th'unknown Clarinda comes, *with you to ſhare*

" The

"*The toils and hazards of the hostile field;*
"*A volunteer to your commands I yield,*
"*Whether to meet the battle on the plain,*
"*Or at the walls the breaches to maintain.*"
The King replies, "*Who has not heard thy*
"*fame?*
"*What distant climes are strangers to thy name?*
"*Thy deeds, illustrious virgin, spread thy praise,*
"*Where-e'er the wand'ring sun reveals his rays:*
"*Assisted thus, we* Godfrey's *arms defy,*
"*By thee secur'd of certain victory;*
"*To thy command our forces we resign;*
"*The war and all it's glorious conduct's thine.*"
Her modest thanks the graceful maid express'd,
And thus, again, her gen'rous suit address'd:
"*Unusual 'tis, I know, my Lord, and hard,*
"*For service unperform'd, to ask reward;*
"*But by your royal clemency, assur'd,*
"*I boldly beg, of quick success secur'd:*
"*Reverse, great Sir, the sentenc'd lovers doom;*
"*An act like this, your bounty will become.*"
"*Nothing was e'er* (the vanquish'd King
reply'd)
"*To such a fair petitioner deny'd;*
"*Their lives, heroick maid, your purchase be*
"*Guilty, or innocent, I set them free.*"



LETTER XVII.

From BELLAMOUR, *relating the Sequel of his Passion for* ALMEDA, *in the Eighth Letter of the First Part of* Letters Moral and Entertaining.

My dear Carlos,

I Am pleased to find, that neither the gaiety of your humour, nor your own successful amours, have made you insensible to the misfortunes of your friend: Your compassion is some relief, for I am really past jesting; and raillery, in this case, would have been inhuman.

You may remember, in my last letter, I had some hopes the discovery of my inclinations for *Almeda* would prevail with *Elvira* to free me from the engagement I made to my Father to marry her; but I was disappointed, all the art and eloquence I employed, to paint the height of my passion for her rival, had just

just the contrary effect: Instead of raising her anger and resentment, it melted her into a tenderness, of which I had never thought her capable: At last she told me, tho' she would not suffer her tongue so far to belye the sentiments of her heart, as to refuse me; yet I might refuse to marry her, if I knew how to dispense with my obligations to a dying Father.

The naming my Father, gave a pious emotion to my soul, and awakened all the filial gratitude and veneration due to his memory: I am no libertine; virtue and vice are with me real distinctions; I dare not violate my word to the meanest of my dependents, nor even to my worst enemy: Honour and conscience have hitherto governed my secret actions: I felt the force of *Elvira*'s words, and left her without making any reply.

But how am I embarrassed! If I had never seen the charming *Almeda*, I must have been unhappy; *Elvira* has been, from her infancy, bred up with my sisters; my affection for her has been always the same as for them, and seems the tie of nature, not of choice: In all the little freedoms of conversation, I have treated her with the same decency, as if she stood in that relation: Destiny

 seemed

ſeemed to have ſet ſome ſacred bounds between us, that it would have been criminal to violate; this ſentiment is ſo habitual to my thoughts, that I could as ſoon commit inceſt, and break in on all the ſanctity of nature's laws, as fall in love with *Elvira*: She is handſome enough, ſo are my ſiſters; I love her, as I do them, with a very pure and innocent affection: Her charms have never kindled one ſoft deſire in my breaſt; rather a religious horror would ſeize me in addreſſing her: She is as ſecure from my attempts, as if an Angel ſtood viſibly before me, to guard her virtue.

In this ſituation, imagine, if you can, how miſerable I muſt be with this legacy of a wife: She brings a vaſt fortune, you will tell me; but, my dear *Carlos*, could ſhe bring me both the *Indies*, it could be no relief to my domeſtick chagrin: I am no rake; nor could you propoſe any faſhionable liberty, but what would heighten my uneaſineſs; yet I dare not reflect on my father; it was not avarice that governed him, but rather compaſſion for a young orphan committed to his care; however I ſuffer, be his memory unblemiſhed,

blemiſhed, and the ſacred remains undiſturbed by my complaints.

But the criſis of my miſery is yet untold; *Almeda* is fixed to her cruel reſolution of ſeeing me no more: To what cave, what deſart, what unfrequented place ſhe is retired, I cannot find; but ſhe is certainly eloped from mortal men, and eſcapes all my inquiries: However, ſhe has favoured me with the incloſed letter ſince her retreat, which I have ſent, to juſtify the height of my paſſion; by which you'll ſee the beauty of her mind is equal to that of her charming perſon. I am,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

BELLAMOUR.

To BELLAMOUR.

" I Had not the leaſt intention ever to " write to you more, or put you in mind " there was ſuch a perſon in the world as " *Almeda*, had not your diſtreſſes reached " me; and your endeavours to find me out, " obliged me to aſſure you, the ſearch is in

“ vain: I am determined never to ſee you
“ more; and this ſhall be the laſt letter you
“ will ever receive from me; which I write
“ purely for your conſolation, if an account
“ of my quiet will be any to you.

“ From the moment you told me my hap-
“ pineſs depended on *Elvira*'s refuſing you,
“ I diſmiſſed every flattering hope: I was
“ ſenſible ſhe knew too well how to diſtin-
“ guiſh merit; and how rarely ſuch excel-
“ lence as your's is to be met with: To
“ reſign you to the poſſeſſion of another, to
“ conquer the warmeſt wiſhes, and find
“ happineſs in giving pleaſure to thoſe we
“ love, abſtracted from ourſelves, is a refine-
“ ment few people are capable of, and what
“ I did not expect from *Elvira*: She is con-
“ ſcious of her own ſuperior charms, and
“ may reaſonably hope to gain your heart;
“ whilſt her eſteem for you would not ſuffer
“ her to let you diſpoſe of your's to a per-
“ ſon, who, in the common views of man-
“ kind, is unworthy of you.

“ Oh! why did fate throw you in my
“ way? Was it only to awaken me from my
“ ſtupid negligence of the world, to a ſenſe
“ of ſorrow? to ſhew me a glimpſe of
“ hap-

" happineſs, only to make me more ſenſible " of my indigence? Had your part in life " been to act the dependent, and mine the " advanced ſtation, you had been left to me " in quiet, nobody would have diſputed my " right: And I ſhould have found more, " much more pleaſure, in rewarding ſuch " merit, than I ſhould have done now in ſhar- " ing your fortune: But why do I expoſtu- " late with Heaven, who, no doubt, allotted " me into this ſphere of life, as moſt ſuit- " able for me? It is in our own power to " make the incidents of human life good or " evil: It is our own minds that conſtitute " them either; the reception they meet with " there, and the turn they take, gives them " their proper tincture. Let us not diſturb " the wiſe œconomy, but ſubmit to the me- " thods of Providence. You have obeyed " your father in the diſpoſal of your perſon " to *Elvira*; let her have your mind alſo, " it is her right; I will confeſs it is. There " only I could envy her happineſs; and it is " there her delicacy could never endure a " rival. Let us not be juſt by halves: May " the ſame generous ſpirit, that carried you " thro' the firſt marks of your obedience,

“ animate you through all the offices of the
“ moſt exalted virtue: I leave you, that I
“ may be no obſtacle to it, and beg you to
“ conſider whatever faults you commit to
“ *Elvira*, I am the occaſion: And while I fly
“ from all commerce with you, to preſerve
“ my innocence, you will fruſtrate my en-
“ deavours, and make me guilty.

“ There is a pleaſure in our very ſorrows,
“ when they flow for a worthy object: You
“ can give me that pleaſure, and juſtify me
“ to myſelf; and by thoſe very virtues that
“ tear you from me, bind me faſter to you,
“ and give me a vanity in you; your happi-
“ neſs will be mine: I will not tell you, that
“ I can forget you; it is impoſſible. The
“ roſes muſt forget to bloom, the birds to
“ warble from the beach; the gay creation
“ be undreſſed, and I inſenſible to perfection,
“ [illegible] your image can be eraſed out of my
“ heart, or it can receive any other impreſ-
“ ſion. A heart that has been your prize,
“ cannot deſcend to a meaner ſacrifice; no,
“ the paſſion you have inſpired, ſuits the
“ grandeur of your exalted genius, and muſt
“ have the ſame duration with your virtue. I
“ retire from the world, not to avoid, but to
“ enjoy

" enjoy you more at liberty. We are never
" absent from those we love; every beauty
" that nature can produce, brings you to
" my thoughts, since you have pointed out
" all their various charms to me; taught me
" how to relish solitude, and directed my
" mind to entertainments above the reach
" of fortune.

" That sentiment of tenderness I have for
" you has some emanation of Divinity up-
" on it; while it naturally leads me to the
" contemplation of the Supreme Excellence,
" and directs my devotions to the Fountain
" of Beauty: Those hopes and fears which
" alternately elevate, or depress the mind,
" in all human expectations, vanish: The
" soul is at liberty to pursue the interest of
" another life, raises it's thoughts above this
" little scene of things, to fairer, future
" worlds; breaks off the fetters that chain
" it to this world, and smiles through her
" prison, with a holy impatience, on the
" joys of immortality: There all human dis-
" tinctions will be lost, and gold will have
" nothing to do in settling of them.

" Perhaps the gay world will pity me,
" and think religion, and a cell, but a me-

" lancholy recourſe; but I ſhall not find it ſo,
" while I am not ſecluded from the generous
" *Monimia*'s chearing eye: Her delicate and
" blameleſs ſenſibility of human paſſions (ſhe
" to whom ſuffering is a merit) ſoftens every
" care, and raiſes every joy; while ſhe de-
" ſcends from the height of grandeur to the
" gentle offices of the ſincere friend, ſhe for-
" gets every advantage of fortune, 'till virtue
" in diſtreſs calls for her aid: Her titles have
" no energy with her, but when they give
" her a privilege of doing good, and then
" ſhe exerts them to their full force; ſhe feels
" they cannot buy freedom to the mind; and
" that no calamity will retire in reſpect to
" them. Fate has ſo ordered it, that there
" is ſome ſimilitude in our deſtinies, which
" reconciles me to mine; while ſhe recom-
" mends piety and reſignation with the ſtrong-
" eſt and moſt beautiful arguments, her own
" example; and fortifies my mind, by put-
" ting every virtue, by her own practice, in
" the moſt amiable light. Sometimes ſhe
" ſings a *Requiem* to our ſorrows; ſooths them
" to peace with the moſt harmonious num-
" bers, and I have the eaſe of ſeeing my
" thoughts expreſſed in hers, with every ele-

" gance; and when the ſerious ſoul exerts " itſelf, ſhe anticipates Heaven, and gives a " ſweet fore-taſte of the ſongs of Angels: " Thus we baffle diſappointment, and elude " our ſufferings; honours, wealth, and beauty, " ſtand abaſh'd to ſee themſelves deſpiſed, " while devotion claps her wings at this her " faireſt triumph.

" You will, I hope, from what I have " ſaid, be ſatisfied I am not unhappy; and " take this laſt aſſurance from me, that I can " never be ſo, whilſt you are bleſs'd. You " have annihilated every ſenſe of ſorrow in " me; I have no tears, but when you claim " them."

Adieu.





LETTER XVIII.

To Lady MARY, *from her Sister just before her Death.*

I Come, ye ghosts; prepare your roseate b w'rs,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs;
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphick, glow.
POPE.

This, my dear Sister, is my long, my final adieu, 'till we meet in happier regions: The springs of life are running low, and nature, tired with human changes, longs to be at rest: The grave attends me, that mansion of silence and repose.

I soon shall close my weary eyes in peace,
And stretch compos'd, upon my dusty bed:
Oh death! thy quiet and refreshing shade
Shall yield a long, an unmolested rest
From all the fruitless toil and vanity
That dwells below the sun——

 I have

I have had an ill ſhare of health for ſome years, and have lately had two fits of an apoplexy; the third my phyſician is ſo ſincere to let me know will be fatal: I am now indiſpoſed, and find ſome certain ſymptoms of it's return; which makes me reſolve to unburden my ſoul of it's laſt preſſure.

Forgive me, ye injured ſhades of my great anceſtors, nor blot my name from your illuſtrious line——My dear ſiſter, can your rigid virtue forgive my fault, and plead my defence to my injured huſband, when I am ſilent in the duſt? Dear Lady *Mary*, will you not pardon a crime which is blotted out by Heaven? With that my peace is made, by a long courſe of temperance. Weeks, and months, and years, are paſt, ſince the date of my guilt: The riſing and the ſetting ſun has been a conſtant witneſs to my devotions; the moon and midnight ſtars were conſcious to my tears.

It is, as you know, ſixteen years ſince I was married to Count *Edgar*: I have had two ſons and three daughters; but ſhall I own this ſhameful truth? the eldeſt of the two brothers is not his! On a fatal night (let the horror of darkneſs cover it) I was, in

my husband's absence, by the Marquis *de* ———, seduced; it was not the contrivance of a formal amour, but the effect of inadvertency and surprize: Oh! where was my guardian angel in that loose moment, that interval of reproach and madness!

The subject is too infamous for me to enter into particulars; but I have full assurance this youth is not the Count's son, though his confidence in me, with his easy temper, kept him from ever making the least inquiry into any circumstance of my guilt: He has lately made his will; and to the eldest brother (being his greatest favourite) given his whole estate; leaving the rest intirely dependent on this son, which, to my confusion, is not his own.

This secret, dear Lady *Mary*, I must intreat you to discover to Count *Edgar* after my death; that he may do his own children justice, and only provide moderately for the other: Assure him, that it was only in this instance I ever wronged my fidelity to him; This is the utmost reparation I can make; and with a mind unburthened, I now cast myself on infinite mercy, and smile in the view of death.

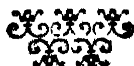
I come,

I come, ye ministers of fate, I come;
But while I pass the intervening gloom,
Should rising doubts my trembling heart invade,
With musick chear the melancholy shade:
In soothing strains a gentle Requiem *sing,*
And touch with heav'nly art, the golden string;
The charming sound shall ev'ry care beguile,
And make the seats of desolation smile:
My soul, prepar'd by sacred ecstasy,
Shall learn, and join the chorus of the sky.

Once more, my dear Sifter adieu! Let my crime warn you never to be vain, or fecure: From the height of felf-confidence, and arrogant virtue, I was left to make this reproachful ftep to humble me. My repentance has been deep and fincere; and, thro' the Divine Redemption, my pardon is procured, and my guilt for ever obliterated.

Your dying Friend,

HERMIONE.





LETTER XIX.

A Letter from ARISTUS, *giving his Friend a Relation of the sudden Death of his new Bride, who was seized in the Chapel while the sacred Rites were performing.*

MY Fate will furnish you with a full evidence of the vanity of human happiness: My last letter was writ in the height of success, with the most arrogant expectations and boast of a lasting felicity; now it is all changed, the shadows of night cover me.

The lovely *Erminia*, whom I had so long pursued, and at last persuaded to crown my wishes, the very morning she gave me her hand, before the sacred ceremony was finished, was surprized with the fatal message of death; and carried in a swoon from the chapel to her chamber, where she soon expired in her mother's arms: This hour she appeared with all the cost and splendour of a youthful bride;

bride; the next, ſhe is a pale and ſenſeleſs corpſe, muffled in a ghaſtly ſhroud: Thoſe charms, that in the morning promiſed an eternal bloom, before the evening have dropped their ſmiling pride; the ſparkling eyes are ſunk in darkneſs; the ſoft, the tuneful voice, is for ever ſilent; while a livid hue ſits on the late roſy lips.

Thus airy pleaſure dances in our eyes,
And ſpreads falſe images in fair diſguiſe,
T' allure our ſouls; 'till juſt within our arms
The viſion dies, and all our painted charms
Flee quick away from the purſuing ſight,
'Till they are loſt in ſhades, and mingle with the night.

O death; How cruel was thy triumph! youth and beauty, joy, and blooming hope, lie here a victim to thy rage: The darkſome priſon of the grave muſt now confine thy gentle captive; inſtead of the pomp of a bridal bed, the cold earth muſt be her lodging, duſt and corruption her covering.

You will now expect I ſhould practiſe the principles I have ſo often aſſerted, in exerciſing my boaſted reaſon and moderation; or leave you to inſult me with the arguments I lately

I lately produced to allay your grief, under the preſſure of an uncommon misfortune: This reproach would be but juſt at a period, when Heaven has given me a full evidence of the truths I confeſſed, and ſet the vanity of human hopes in the cleareſt demonſtration before me. One would think I ſhould now, if ever, find it eaſy to moralize on theſe ſubjects, and act the philoſopher from mere neceſſity, if not from virtue.

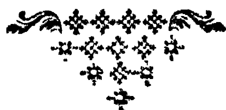
Were the caſe yours, or any-body's but my own, how many wiſe things ſhould I repeat! how fluently could I talk! ſo much more eaſy is it to dictate than to practiſe: And yet I am reaſonable by intervals; I am in more than name a Chriſtian; in ſome bright periods I feel the force of that profeſſion, and pay homage to its ſacred rules: A heavenly ray ſcatters my grief, and chears my ſoul with divine conſolations: The gay and the gloomy appearances of mortal things vaniſh before the gleams of celeſtial light: Immortal pleaſures, with gentle invitations, call me to the ſkies, and all my thoughts aſcend.

But how ſhort my triumph! how eaſy the tranſition from reaſon to madneſs! Of what ſurprizing variety is a human mind capable!

p.ble! Light and darkneſs, heaven and hell, ſeem blended within; it is all chaos, and wild diſorder: That reaſon which one moment relieves me, the next ſeems with a juſt train of ideas to torment me.

See there, all pale and dead, ſhe lies;
For ever flow my ſtreaming eyes:
Fly Hymen, *with extinguiſh'd fires;*
Fly nuptial bliſs, and chaſte deſires:
Erminia'*s fled, the lovely'ſt mind,*
Faith, ſweetneſs, wit, together join'd.
Dwelt faith, and wit, and ſweetneſs there?
Oh, view the change, and drop a tear.

Adieu.





LETTER XX.

To LYCIDAS.

My dear LYCIDAS,

THERE are ſeaſons, when the mind dilates itſelf, and ſenſible of its own grandeur, breaks through the limits of this lower creation, in ſearch of ſome unknown, and yet untaſted pleaſures: This is my preſent diſpoſition; the wide limits of the ſky have nothing to entertain me: Nature ſeems exhauſted and indigent; ſhould ſhe uncover her golden mines, or diſcloſe the ruby ſparkling in its bed, let her open the veins of ſapphire, and ſhew the diamond glittering on it's native rock——I have no avarice of this kind; the orient clouds that now adorn the morning ſky, could I reach them, would be a more ſubſtantial treaſure. —Appear, ye faireſt blandiſhments of ſenſe; tho' lovely as the daughters of *Eden*, your allurements would now be loſt.—Let ſenſuality appear in all her charms, the *Perſian* delicacy,

delicacy, and the *Roman* pride:—Let the pageantry of ſtate, the triumphs loſt in long oblivion, put on airy forms, and paſs in their viſionary ſplendour before me; in my preſent ſituation, methinks I could deſpiſe them all. Theſe ſcenes would be but tireſome repetitions; for they are no novelties to my active imagination, *Cleopatra*'s expenſive vanity, and *Pompey*'s glory, are familiar themes to my luxuriant fancy: Their deſcriptions rather tire, than delight me. Even the magnificence of the ſtarry arch, the ſplendid ſtructure of the univerſe, I now ſurvey with indolence: I grow impatient to ſee a new and brighter ſcene appear; when theſe old heavens, and antiquated earth, ſhall put off their periſhable forms, and ſtand dreſſed in immortal beauty, and undecaying excellence. Bleſſed period! why art thou ſo long delayed! Oh ſtretch thy ſhining wings, and come away! Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and ſhake thy ſlow-paced ſands! Make ſhorter circles, ye rolling planets! Thou lingering ſun, how long wilt thou travel the celeſtial road! When ſhall thy radiant walk be finiſhed! When will the great angel arreſt thee in thy progreſs, and ſwear by him that

that made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein, that *Time shall be no more!*

My impatient soul springs forward to salute the happy period, and anticipates the promised joy.

Great nature then, tho' all her diff'rent works,
Shall be transform'd, the earth, and those gay skies,
Shall be no more the same; a brighter scene
Succeeds; and paradise, in all it's charms,
Shall be renew'd; but far it's bliss improv'd,
Fitted for minds, to whom the mighty Maker
Shall give the glorious vision of his face
Unveil'd, and smiling with eternal love.
Here let me dwell, nor turn one careless look
On yonder hated world;—here let me drink
Full draughts of bliss, and bathe in endless floods
Of life and joy;—here let me still converse.
It cannot be! – Mortality returns!
Ye radiant skies, adieu!—Ye starry worlds,
I must fulfill my day, and wait the hour,
That brings eternal liberty and rest.

My native element prevails, and I must return to my original earth again; but I believe you are not overjoyed at this event; you could have resigned me to the skies, in your present disposition: An earthly amour seems

seems to engross your affection; and I should much more have obliged you, by a discourse of mortal charms, than of celestial attachments: But you must excuse me, my mind is in a position too sublime and delicate for these terrene nymphs; as fair as your mistress is, you have no rival in me; at this instant I am all for the immortals.

Oh ye fair objects, ye untainted springs,
Of ev'ry excellence, that charms the sense!
Ye native beauties, ye primæval sweets,
That blossom in the skies; but for the hopes
Of these pure entertainments after death,
My soul would joyfully give up it's claim
To an immortal state: For what is life,
Reason, and these capacities of bliss,
If lost on toys! No, I have nobler aims,
Desire unbounded by these narrow skies,
These gaudy, flying, transitory scenes;
Eternal glories, and enchanting beauties!

Next time I see you, on condition you will let me laugh, you shall talk of loves and graces, lilies and roses, flames and darts; 'till *Chanticleer* gives his last summons to the phantoms and fairies to disappear.

CLERIMONT.



LETTER XXI.

To the Earl of——.

My Lord,

I Am just recovered of the wound I received in the duel, which you with so much reason and humanity endeavoured to prevent. I think myself now under an obligation to own the justice and force of your Lordship's arguments, and to retract whatever I said in defence of such an inhuman practice: It was frenzy that made me reject the advice of one who had so true a notion of honour, and whose courage had been so gloriously employed in the cause of liberty, and the Protestant Succession.

You told me what the event of this mad adventure would be, that instead of defending, I should expose my sister's innocence to the publick censure: It is too late for me to wish I had been guided by your generous and friendly admonitions, which for the future will wear the stamp of infallibility on them; nor can I propose to myself a nobler

example

example than your Lordſhip's in every part of human life; the generous friend, the tender huſband, and affectionate parent, appear in their proper luſtre:——Virtue, with a ſuperior excellence, ſhines in your character, and enforces her precepts with reſiſtleſs eloquence

The review of your conduct is a ſevere reproach to my own: I ſhall never reflect on my late ridiculous exploit without confuſion: Whatever bravery I affected, I was conſcious of the moſt ſlaviſh fears, in the midſt of my inſolent flights of vanity; deliberate guilt hung heavy on my ſoul; I ſpent the night before the bloody aſſignation in anguiſh, which no words can expreſs; infernal viſions haunted my imagination; the caverns of night, the joyleſs abodes, diſcloſed their terrors to my diſtracted fancy.

But ſo entirely was I governed by the maxims of the licentious part of the world, that with great gallantry I challenged my own ruin, and bid defiance to death and damnation; expoſing myſelf to all the horrors, dreadful to reaſon and nature, to avoid the imputation of cowardice.

So tyrannical a thing is cuſtom, that it is neceſſary to aſk the world forgiveneſs, for preſuming to be reaſonable creatures: People

ple are often compelled to be mad in their own defence, and to act against their reason, to avoid being singular. It is hard indeed, that the caprice of mankind should expect an apology from the few that are wiser than the rest, for being awake and in their right senses; that they should be forced to excuse themselves, for keeping their eyes open, and having penetration enough to foresee a distant danger, and so much discretion as to avoid it.

A man resolved to leap from a precipice, might with a better assurance ridicule his companions for not promising to follow him; and more justly reproach them with cowardice, for refusing to break their necks, than men of honour can upbraid a person for not complying with their rules of valour, at the expence of his life, and all his hopes of future happiness. If my generous adversary had not spared my life, when it lay at his mercy, (while my salvation depended upon that important moment) instead of giving you this penitent relation, I had been now cursing my own folly, under the weight of eternal infamy.

Your Lordship's, &c.

ANTONIO.



LETTER XXII.

To VALERIUS, *from an* English *Merchant; giving an Account of the Adventures of his Voyage.*

I Am at laſt ſafely arrived in *Holland*, and have taken the firſt opportunity to give you a relation of the adventures that detained me ſo long in foreign countries.

In my return from the *Indies*, I had ſome affairs with a *Spaniſh* merchant, which while I was managing in one of their ſea-ports, there came in a *Spaniſh* corſair, who had taken a rich *Turkiſh* prize, with ſeveral *Turks* and *Moors* priſoners, whom he offered to ſell as ſlaves: I never had any traffick of this kind, from any view of intereſt; but from a motive of compaſſion, I had purchaſed liberty for many a miſerable wretch, to whom I gave freedom, the moment I paid his ranſom.

Among the captives newly taken, there was one diſtinguiſhed by the richneſs of his habit,

habit, and more by the gracefulness of his port. He drew all my attention, of which he appeared sensible, and still directed his looks to me; our souls seemed to greet one another, as if their intimacy had been of a long standing, and commenced in some pre-existent period: There was something in the air of this young stranger superior to adversity, and yet sensible of the present disadvantage of his fate; while I felt for him an emotion, soft as the ties of nature, and could not but impute it to the secret impression of some intelligent power, which was leading me to a height of generosity beyond my own intention; and by an impulse of virtue on my soul, directing it to the accomplishment of some distant and unknown design of Providence: The heavenly instigation came with a prevailing force, and I could not but obey it's dictates.

The price set on this captive was extravagantly high, and such as would be a vast disadvantage to my present affairs to part with: However, I listened to the gentle monitor within, and paid the corsair his full demands.

As soon as I had conducted the youth to my lodgings, I told him, he was from that moment free; the price I had paid was for his friendship and liberty.

Then you have confined me (replied the gentle stranger) *by the most lasting engagements; I might have broke through any other restraint, but I am now your voluntary slave, and dare trust you with a secret yet unknown to the* Spaniards: *My name is* Orramel, *the only son of a wealthy* Bassa *in* Constantinople, *and you may demand what you will for my ransom.*

You will soon be convinced (said I) *there was no mercenary intention in this action; the amity I have for you is noble and disinterested; it was kindled by a celestial spark, and emanation from the divine clemency, and terminates in nothing below your immortal happiness: And were you inclined to examine those sacred truths which would lead you to that felicity, and to share my fortune in a free and happy nation, the wealth of the* Indies *should not buy you from my affections: But if it is your choice to return to the customs and religion of your country, you are absolutely free, without attending any terms for your release.*

With a friendly, but dejected look, he told me, it was impoſſible for him to diſpenſe with his filial obligations to an indulgent parent; but he poſitively refuſed his freedom, 'till he had given intelligence, and received an anſwer from his father; which he ſoon had with a *Carte Blanche* to me, on which I might make my own demands for his Son's ranſom. I returned it, with no other terms, but the liberty of all the Chriſtian ſlaves he had in his poſſeſſion; hoping, by this diſintereſted conduct, to leave a conviction on the mind of my young friend, in favour of Chriſtianity. He could perſuade me to receive nothing but ſome little preſent, and left me with an apparent concern.

It was ſome months after he was gone, before I could finiſh my negotiations in *Spain*; but as ſoon as they were diſpatched, I embarked for *Holland*. We had not been a week at ſea, before the ſhip was taken by a *Turkiſh* pirate, and all the men in it carried to *Conſtantinople*, to be ſold as ſlaves: My lot fell to a maſter from whom I was like to find moſt barbarous treatment; however, I was reſolved to endure my bondage, 'till I could give intelligence to my friends in

England,

England, to procure my ranſom: I was fixed to this, that no hardſhip ſhould reduce me to give *Orramel* an account of my diſtreſs, 'till I was again in circumſtances not to need his kindneſs, nor expect a retaliation of my own.

But Heaven had kinder intentions by bringing me into this adverſity, nor left me long without redreſs: As I was talking in a publick place, to one of my fellow-ſlaves, *Orramel* came by; he paſſed beyond me, but inſtantly returning, looked on me with great attention, 'till ſome melting ſorrow dropped from his eyes: When making inquiry of ſome that were near, to whom I belonged, and being informed, without ſpeaking a word to me, he flew to my new maſter, paid his demand for my ranſom, and immediately conducted me to his houſe, where he welcomed me with the warmeſt marks of affection: He ſpoke—— he pauſed ——and was in the greateſt perplexity, to find language ſuitable to the ſentiments of his ſoul.

My Brother! (ſaid he) *my Friend!—or if there are more ſacred ties in nature or virtue, let me call you by ſome gentler appellation: We*

are now united by the bands of celestial amity, one in the same holy faith, and hopes of a glorious immortality: Your charity rescued me from a worse than Spanish *slavery, from the bondage of vice and superstition; your conduct banished my prejudices to the Christian name, and made way for the entrance of those heavenly truths, to which I now assent. But this is a secret even to my own domesticks; and whether such a caution is criminal, I am not yet able to determine.*

With what rapture, what attention, did I listen to this language! I blessed the accents, that told me my friend, my *Orramel*, had embraced the Christian Faith. An angel's song would have been less melodious: I looked upward, and with a grateful elevation of mind, gave the glory to the supreme disposer of all human events. The instinct was from above, that first moved me to ransom this young captive; thence was the spring of my compassion: It would be vanity, it would be the most criminal arrogance, not to ascribe this action to the assisting Deity.

The illustrious *Orramel* made it his joy, his study, to evidence his affection: He told me, his father died since we parted in *Spain*, and

that he had left five daughters, which he had by several of his wives: He offered me the choice of his sisters, if I had any thoughts of marriage, and promised a dowry with her to my own content: One of them, he said, was privately bred a Christian, by her Mother, a beautiful woman of *Armenia*: I was pleased with the proposal, and impatient to see my fair mistress. In the mean time, he made me a present of several rich habits, and two Negroes to attend me.

The next day, he conducted me to a fair summer-house, whither he sent for his sisters; who were all so handsome, that I was distressed with my own liberty, nor knew where to chuse, had not a principle of piety determined me to the young *Armenian*, who was not superior in beauty to the rest, but there was a decorum in her behaviour, which the others wanted: She had more of the modesty and politeness of the *European* women, to whom you know I was always partial: My choice was fixed, and the more I conversed with my fair mistress, the more reason I found to approve it. We were privately married by a chaplain belonging to the *British* Envoy. My generous friend

gave her a fortune which abundantly repaid all my loſſes; and after a proſperous voyage, I am ſafely landed in *Holland*.

I have ſent you this relation, as a memorial of my gratitude to Heaven; whoſe clemency has returned me more than meaſure for meaſure, and largely recompenſed that liberality it firſt inſpired.

Adieu.





LETTERS

Moral and Entertaining.

PART III.

LETTER I.

To Lady SOPHIA: *The Sequel of the Story of* ROSALINDA.

YOU will find me, dear Lady *Sophia*, in a more gay dispoſition than when I writ my laſt letter; perhaps the fair ſeaſon has ſome influence on my temper; the ſpring is now in it's prime, and blooming nature appears in all her various pride; the fields and groves reſound with artleſs har-

mony; the linnet and warbling lark invite me often to rise with the fragrant morning; nor am I unwilling to obey the gentle summons, though, 'till I came here, I had never beheld the rising Sun; the sight was as great a novelty to me, as a blazing-star would have been; the opening dawn was one of the *arcana* of nature, into which my curiosity had never pried. Indeed, I had read many poetical descriptions of the rosy-fingered morning unbarring the gates of light, and decked in golden vestments, beginning her progress over the *eastern* hills, but I left *Aurora* to her rural hours, without the least inclination to trace her footsteps in the pearly dew. She was no precedent for me; I was too polite to open my eyes at such ungenteel seasons; the Sun shone in vain, it's beams were useless 'till the modish world appeared.

But I have now conquered these refinements, and can bear the aukward custom of rising with the fresh morning, and going to bed when the dusky evening closes, or I might keep myself awake while every other intelligent Being on this part of the globe sleeps, when human affairs cease, and the calm creation seems lull'd in a peaceful slumber, ex-

cept elves and fairies: I cannot preciſely determine what hours they keep; but here is a nurſe in the family who is intimately acquainted (as ſhe ſays) with theſe ſprightly phantoms; ſhe has been admitted to their moon-light revels, and has led me to many a circle diſtinguiſhed with perpetual verdure, where they uſe to dance their light fantaſtick rounds. *Bridget* and *Joyce*, our two dairymaids, add their teſtimony to the nurſe's, and relate their own viſionary experience. I am no great infidel, ſometimes I believe, and always wiſh the pretty ſtories they tell me were true; but I dare not object againſt any of thoſe relations, for fear of being thought a Heathen by the whole village.

My circumſtances are now very eaſy, my miſtreſs is fully purſuaded my education has been ſuperior to my preſent ſtation, and treats me more like a ſiſter than a ſervant; I am under no reſtraints but thoſe of gratitude and juſtice, which will not ſuffer me to be idle, where I know myſelf to be dependent.

For a damſel of quality I can work well enough with my needle; and as this is all my miſtreſs will ſuffer me to do, I carry my work to ſome verdant retreat, of which here

are great variety, in a large garden and wide range of orchard joining to the houſe. I am delighted with old-faſhioned bowers covered with woodbind and ſweet-briar, and can ſit as much at my eaſe on a bank of camomile ſhaded with laurel, as ever I did in a painted alcove. Maple-trees and box, with buſhes of roſes, are placed about in a very agreeable diſorder; the whole ſcene appears gay, but wild above rule or art:

——While nature here
Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
Her virgin fancies——

MILTON.

The orchard joining to it is ſpacious and fair as the *Heſperian* incloſures; violets, primroſe, and crocus, embroider the level green, on which you tread; the trees are ſet in rows, their branches mingle above, and are now in their gaudy bloſſoms; the birds ſit careleſs on the flowery ſprays, and from their little throats pour out a ſtream of harmony, while fragrant gales refreſh the ſenſe, and with their aromatick breath diffuſe gladneſs to the ſoul.

Juſt at the bounds of this luxuriant retreat ſtands an antient oak; the extended boughs

are a ſhelter from the mid-day Sun, which perhaps your Ladyſhip would endure, rather than ſcreen your Beauty in ſuch a ruſtick ſhade: *Elyſian* groves and myrtle bowers are better ſuited to the delicacy of your imagination; but I am now reconciled to nature in it's greateſt negligence, and, ſeated in this venerable receſs, find virtue and liberty the principal ſprings of human happineſs: My hours are here at my own diſpoſal, nor am I obliged to devote them to ceremony or vain amuſements. I find myſelf under no neceſſity to court the impertinent, or flatter the ambitious, nor to do a thouſand unreaſonable things, for fear of being ſingular and out of the mode.

The only intimacy I have contracted is with a daughter of the miniſter of this pariſh; they call her *Sally*; her converſation is perfectly innocent and agreeable, and has ſomething in it charming beyond all the ſpecious rules and ſtudied elegance of the Beau Monde; ſhe has ſpent her leiſure in reading, and has certainly peruſed all the good books in her father's ſtudy, having never opened a page on any ſubject but religion, except *Argalus* and *Parthenia*. Her preciſeneſs is all natural and unaffected; her looks,

her words, her whole behaviour, has an air of ſanctity; one can hardly believe her an inhabitant of this world, but rather a native of ſome more refined and holy region; the ſweetneſs of her countenance; with the ſurprizing beauty of her whole perſon, would confirm this thought, if ſome evidence of mortality did not appear in her declining health: She believes herſelf in a conſumption, and talks of dying as calmly as moſt people talk of going to ſleep.

However, this indifference is not perhaps intirely the effect of piety; a tender paſſion ſeems to have ſome ſhare in it; her health began to decline from the time her lover died: He was the ſon of a neighbouring clergyman; their marriage was concluded by the conſent of both their parents. There had been an innocent tenderneſs between them from their childhood, and juſt at the period ſet to crown their mutual paſſion, the youth was ſeized with a fever, which ended his life, and left the gentle maid to mourn her diſappointed joys.

Since that ſhe has no attachment to this world, all her ſchemes of happineſs are in a future ſtate, on which her whole attention is fixed; and nothing can be more ſparkling

than

than her conversation on these subjects. As some people grow dull and morose in talking of religion, it brightens her countenance, gives a vivacity to her thoughts, and heavenly eloquence to her tongue: The beauty of the spangled firmament in a clear summer evening gives her an apparent pleasure. "In "a little time (she often says) I shall have a "nearer view of those radiant wonders, and "shall myself outshine their glimmering "lustre."

You would be glad, Lady *Sophia*, if I would leave *Sally* with the angels, and talk to you of Knights of the Garter, Blue Ribbands, embroidered coats, and other sublunary things. There is such a wide extreme betwixt these subjects and heavenly themes, that I cannot introduce your tender affair with any manner of decorum; the descent is too precipitant. But if I must talk of love, my own amour is somewhat more of the ethereal kind than yours, and the transition will not be so difficult.

Nor will it displease you, to hear that my lover continues constant, with the addition of six thousand a year to his estate: It was left him by one of the *S——r* family, who lately died without an heir.

My

My mistress has been a constant advocate for the lovely youth, believing his proposal a vast preferment for me; while my generous lover makes his addresses with greater warmth and assurance than when his estate was less, thinking it now in his power to offer me a reparation for whatever misfortune hath reduced me to a state so unequal to what (he is persuaded) my education has been.

I have not yet accepted his proposal, nor discovered my rank to him; but it is very probable I shall do both. What objection can I, or rather what can you, make against it? His descent is every way illustrious, and has vastly the advantage of mine; nature has distinguished him with an air of grandeur, beyond all the borrowed lustre of titles or equipage. There is an elegance in his behaviour superior to the rules of art or imitation; not *Paris*, when confessed Prince on the plains of *Ida*, appeared more graceful: He talks of love, not in the strains of dramatick frenzy, but with the sobriety of reason and virtue: Persuasion dwells on his tongue, while he describes the gentle passion in accents calm as the midnight air. What the consequence will be, I cannot yet determine. Dear Lady *Sophia*, adieu.



LETTER II.

To Lady SOPHIA.

MY Romance is now finiſhed the drama is come to a concluſion; I have been married theſe four months, and from the ſober regular way of life I am now in, you muſt expect no more adventures.

I forgot in my laſt to inform you, that with the ſix thouſand a year there was a ſeat nobly furniſhed left to——What muſt I call him? not my huſband, for fear the aukward domeſtick ſound ſhould give you the ſpleen: And if I ſhould give him the appellation of my gallant, my lover, or the charming youth, you would think me run mad in romance: But I hope I may call him by his proper name, which is *Lucius*.

The ſeat of which he is now the poſſeſſor, looks like the abode of liberty and guiltleſs delight; the ſituation has ſomething in it ſo jovial and airy, that it gives an alacrity to the

the mind: It ſtands on a gentle riſing, with a view of a ſpacious vally before it, thro' which a luxuriant river draws it's ſhining train, and bleſſes the borders with immortal verdure; the wide campaign beyond opens a fair variety of hills, of groves, and fertile plains, which terminate in a diſtant proſpect of the ſea. You have this beautiful ſcene of nature from every window in the front of the houſe.

The oppoſite ſide of the ſtructure diſcloſes a quite different view; as that ſeems the triumph of nature, this appears the inſult of art; the gardens and groves are ſo exquiſitely fine and regular, that I fancy myſelf in Fairy land; it looks all like the effect of enchantment, and beyond human contrivance.

The loves and graces figured in the painted alcoves perſuade me, I am got among the immortals, who ſeem to court me to their ſoft receſſes; when through a long viſto the ſmiling forms riſe in juſt proportion before me, I converſe with deities, and am charmed with the wonders of the poetical world.

I find leiſure enough for theſe viſionary delights, being diſcharged from family cares by my huſband's grandmother, who is qualified

to

to manage those affairs with great prudence and decency: It is a pleasure to me to submit to her advice in every punctilio, as I find it obliges *Lucius*, who treats her with the utmost deference and respect; nor fails to find some handsome excuse for any thing that has the appearance of obstinacy or caprice in her temper.

His merit in every occurrence secures my esteem; an air of justice and benignity shines through his whole conduct; his mind was in the same elevation when his fortune was at the lowest; nor has this unexpected turn had the least influence on the modesty and evenness of his disposition: His management in every thing is at once generous and discreet; he has devoted a thousand pounds a year, out of the six thousand, to charitable uses; another thousand he secured to me for my peculiar expences; the rest to be spent in his household, the charge of which he has limited to his income, and pays his bills once a month with great exactness, that no honest tradesman may be injured by his delay. Whatever trespass is done by the carelessness of his servants, in the pursuit of their rural

sports,

ſports, he patiently hears the complaints of the ſufferers, and reſtores their damage to the full.

His compaſſion is equal to his juſtice; never has he been ſeen to turn away from a ſpectacle of pity; never has he ſhut his ears to the voice of diſtreſs: never, by an inſolent reproach, ſilenced the cries of poverty, nor delayed his bounty to the neceſſitous.

Several honeſt clerygmen with large families, and narrow incomes, have already experienced his generoſity, and bleſſed their young benefactor. He has taken a ſon of a neighbouring miniſter into the family, who was bred at the Univerſity, and is a youth of great piety, and very good ſenſe; he reads conſtantly to us morning and evening prayers, when not a ſervant in the houſe is ſuffered to be abſent.

Lucius has a handſome collection of *Engliſh* and *French* authors; his father lived long enough to ſee him inſtructed in both theſe languages; ſo that his books, with the converſation of the young ſtudent, are the agreeable amuſement of his leiſure hours, which are not ſo many as he ſeems to wiſh, his rank and merit ſtill engaging him in a

new

newacquaintance, there being ſeveral gentlemens ſeats ſcattered about in this pleaſant campaign.

I find myſelf more free and diſengaged, having no companion but *Sally*: In her converſation I forget I am below the ſtars, and mingle with immortal beings; her ſentiments are all elevated and refined, the language of heaven flows from her lips in accents ſweet as an angel's voice; ſhe has a ſurprizing memory, and ſpeaks the fineſt parts of *Milton* by heart: I fancy myſelf among the celeſtial minſtrels, when ſhe repeats that deſcription where

———Their golden harps they take,
Harps ever tun'd, that, glitt'ring by their ſide,
Like quivers hung, and, with preamble ſweet
Of charming ſymphony, they introduce
Their ſacred ſong, and waken raptures high.

Mr. *Pope*'s MESSIAH is another of her favourite poems; which ſhe recites with ſuch a graceful pronunciation, that it ſeems always new and ſurprizing.

But while I am enjoying this agreeable ſociety, I know it is a pleaſure that is ſtealing from me, like ſome fair flower, whoſe bloom withers while I am regaling my ſenſe with

it's

it's fragrancy: The young faint is bidding adieu to mortal things, and preparing for her native fkies. I brought her hither, to try if the change of air would mend her health. But I fee no advantage fhe has by it; and finding her impatient to return, I have promifed to carry her in my chaife to-morrow back to her father's houfe. I go the more willingly, that I may make a vifit to the peaceful abode where I fpent fo many happy hours.

I know not if my miftrefs has yet recovered the confufion fhe was in, at the difcovery of my quality. As for *Lucius*, it feemed to be no fecret to him; he told me, there was fomething in my behaviour, that convinced him I was not in my proper ftation; but by what misfortune I was funk, he could never make the leaft conjecture: My conduct, he thought, was too referved to fuffer him to fufpect any-thing to my difadvantage; and when he found my concealment was on a religious account, it gave him the higheft fatisfaction, to find it in his power to place me in circumftances more agreeable and independent.

Two or three days after I was married, I writ to my father with all the fubmiffion and tendernefs that natural affection could dictate;

dictate: I am informed he relents, and is pleased with an alliance to this noble family; but I have not yet had the honour of any letter or message from his Lordship. Oh, could I throw myself at his feet, and once more hear his paternal blessing, my happiness were complete!

The PASTORAL I have inclosed was only writ as a solitary amusement; which makes me send it without any apology, or giving myself the airs of being an author: I hope it will not displease you, that my shepherd happens to be a Christian, and that the Pastoral scene lies on the *British* plains, as long as I leave you to wander at your leisure in the vale of *Tempe*, or follow your fleecy charge on the fair *Arcadian* pastures. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

ROSALINDA.

A PASTORAL.

HENRY and *LUCY*.

HENRY.

LUCY, while resting in this verdant shade,
By Pow'r Divine thus elegantly made,
Say, can'st thou envy pomp and regal rooms,
Gay with the luxury of *Persian* looms?
Or painted roofs, whose beauty would entice
The thoughts thro' all the fabled joys of vice?
Fabled, indeed! true joys it cannot boast,
Since pleasure flies when innocence is lost;
Remorse, despair, and ev'ry cruel guest,
Become the inmates of the guilty breast.

LUCY.

How spotless, *Henry*, is thy well-turn'd mind,
Averse to ill, to follow good inclin'd!
With thee conversing, ev'ry day I learn
New charms in sacred virtue to discern;
And emulous of thee, with joy pursue
That goodness I admire and love in you.

HENRY.

HENRY.

Thou need'ſt not learn of me; in nature's book
Thou may'ſt on thy Creator's wiſdom look:
And as the planets run their conſtant race,
His glorious footſteps in their order trace.
He bids the ſun in all its beauty riſe,
To bleſs our ſoil, and gild the vaulted ſkies;
And, by the word of his Almighty pow'r,
Ordains the moon to chear the midnight hour;
While ſparkling ſtars in ſolemn order wait
Upon her ſilent courſe, to grace her ſtate.

LUCY.

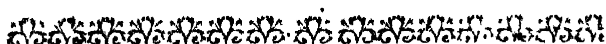
Nor in the ſkies alone his pow'r is ſeen;
We view it in the grove, and flow'ry green;
To imitate whoſe charms all art is faint:
The roſe's glowing bluſh what hand can paint?
Or equal the pale lily's ſnowy hue,
Or emulate the corn-flow'r's gloſſy blue?

HENRY.

Sure, *Lucy*, we, like the firſt Pair, are bleſt,
While here, ſecure with innocence and reſt,
Our

Our happy hours on downy pinions fly;
When thus assisted by faith's steadfast eye,
Upon our Maker's works we humbly gaze,
And, for their goodness, render him the praise.
Thus, in the Patriarchs days, the *Jewish* swains,
Who fed their flocks on *Mamre*'s fruitful plains,
Worship'd *Jehovah* in the woods and field,
And prais'd his name for all the fruit they yield;
Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
To guard their nights, and sanctify their days.
But, see! the ev'ning o'er the dewy lawn
Already has her sable curtain drawn;
Homeward we'll go, and, as we slowly walk,
Beguile the tedious way with farther talk.





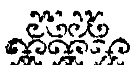
LETTER III.

From the same: To *Lady* SOPHIA.

MADAM,

THE day after I writ to you last, I carried *Solly* home; where I left her, not thinking, when we parted, that we were to meet no more in this world: But so it proved; she languished about three weeks, and then, without any struggle, or convulsive pangs, gently resigned her breath.

With what impatience she attended the happy period, the inclosed will inform you: She writ it a few days before she died, and gave it in charge, to one of her friends, to deliver it to me.



" *To* ROSALINDA.

" Dear Lady FRANCES,

" MY ſands are now running low; the
" ſprings of life will ſoon ceaſe; the
" duſt is returning to it's native duſt, and the
" immortal part to it's great Original; the
" happy day is dawning, which ſhall never
" be ſhaded with ſucceeding night; ſome
" glimmerings of celeſtial glory break thro'
" the gloom, and ſcatter the horrors of
" death; I hear from far the harps of hea-
" ven in ſoft preludiums call me to the ſkies.

" I ſhall ſhortly mingle with the morning
" ſtars, and converſe with the firſt-born
" ſons of light; I ſhall enter the bliſsful aſ-
" ſembly, and be numbered among the glit-
" tering attendants of the empyrean courts;
" the Supreme Excellence ſhall unveil
" itſelf, and ſuffer me to gaze on un-
" created beauty; I ſhall feel the force,
" and breathe the raptures, of immortal
" love; the ſmiling moments, crown'd with
" joy and ever-blooming life, muſt now
" begin their everlaſting round.

" The

"The ſtormy ocean is paſt; the ſhort fa-
"tigue fulfilled; the peaceful haven is in
"view: I am juſt ſetting my foot on the
"bliſsful coaſt; the charming land of love,
"the aromatick breezes already meet me
"from the fragrant ſhore, and chear me in
"the laſt faintings of nature.

"Dear Lady *Frances*, adieu! 'Till now I
"never bid you a glad farewel, nor parted
"without reluctance: But we ſhall meet in
"more ſerene climates; we ſhall meet in
"the fulneſs of joy, in the elevations of
"glory. Mine, indeed, by the juſt degrees
"of recompence, will be a ſtation far below
"yours; my probation has been only the
"paſſive exerciſe of content and patience:
"But ſuch virtue as yours, which has tri-
"umph'd on all the gay allurements of the
"world, ſhall meet a glorious diſtinction;
"the noble army of martyrs will receive you
"to their number, grace you with the ra-
"diant circlet and victorious palm, and re-
"cord your conqueſt in the annals of heaven.

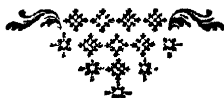
"I ſpeak this to animate your virtue, to
"encourage you in the race of glory: I am
"now paſt flattery, or dependence on the
"greateſt of mortals; but I feel the moſt

" tender concern for your happineſs, and
" ſhall carry the gentle impreſſion to the
" regions of exalted friendſhip, the native
" dominions of love, to which I am now
" going. Once more, my dear *Roſalinda*,
" adieu!"

This Letter came to me with the ſad tidings of her death: No language can deſcribe my grief in it's juſt emphaſis. You will give me leave to weep; and ſympathize with

Yours,

ROSALINDA





LETTER IV.

To CARLOS.

AS you was the confident of my unjust design, in visiting *Philander* at his country-seat, you have reason to suspect I should inform you of the success of that adventure.

I had a secret passion for *Aspasia* before her marriage with this noble youth, and flattered myself with some hopes of finding her prepossessed in my favour.

You know how exceeding cautious and discreet I have been in my pleasures, and with what dissimulation I have secured to myself the character of a man of honour and sobriety: By this advantage I found it easy to impose on my friend, whose goodness was real and unaffected, while his unblemished integrity left him unguarded to all my artifice.

But I found it impossible to delude my father by my specious virtues; his penetration saw through that disguise, by which I had

escaped the publick censure; nor could any thing have been more detestable to his open temper, than the affectation and hypocrisy of mine. After he had traced one of my most criminal intrigues, and found me unreclaimed by his tenderest admonitions, he resolved to disinherit me, and settle his estate on my younger brother, who is really possessed of all those good qualities to which, with a vain ostentation, I have only pretended.

My brother, perceiving my father's disgust, and the intention he had to make him his heir, with an unequall'd generosity gave me intelligence of the threatened misfortune, desiring me to employ some friend to persuade my father from his severe proceeding.

This news came to me while I was detained a willing guest by *Philander* at his country-seat: I discovered the affair to him, who immediately offered to attempt a reconciliation: I gladly accepted the kind intention, nor knew any person so likely to succeed.

Philander proposed staying two or three days with my father, in order to insinuate himself the more sucessfully: In the mean time, I found but too easy access to the fair *Aspasia*; and, by an artifice that deserves the

the blackest infamy, prevailed with her to make a criminal appointment in a private garden belonging to the house.

This was the second day of her husband's absence; the happy hour (as I then thought it) arrived, when I was to attend my mistress in a sequestered arbour: But just as I was entering the walk that led to it, a footman came hastily after me with a letter from *Philander*, which brought me the welcome news of his success with my father. The vast satisfaction he expressed for having procured this reconciliation, with the real concern for my welfare, which appeared in every line, raised a sense of honour in my soul: I read the letter again, and found my guilt aggravated by it's bright reverse; my falshood was heightened by the warmth and fidelity with which the generous man had pursued my interest; my crime stood before me in it's most infamous view: But how to extricate myself from this perplexity, I was intirely at a loss.

To neglect an opportunity I had with such solicitude obtained; to disappoint a yielding beauty; to dare the effects of her contempt or resentment, by acting contrary to all the gallant maxims of the world, was

doing the utmoſt violence to a diſpoſition like mine. But then, to wrong my friend with an evidence of his fidelity in my hand, where every tender line would reproach ſuch villainy; *Alexander* and *Scipio* (I told myſelf) would condemn me; with many an heroick Pagan, who, in the height of youthful deſires, had conquered the allurements of a guilty paſſion.

It was happy for me, that ſome accident prevented *Aſpaſia* from following me ſo ſoon as ſhe deſigned. I was ſo far from being impatient at her abſence, that I bleſſed every moment's delay, and was contriving to avoid the interview juſt as I ſaw her entering the garden.

I had been unuſed to mental devotion; and yet, in this dangerous moment, on which my perdition ſeemed to hang, I ſent a ſecret prayer to Heaven for aſſiſtance.

Inſtead of flying to the charmer's embraces with the gaiety of a lover, I went forward with a ſlow reluctant pace 'till we met, and then gave her my friend's Letter. As ſoon as ſhe had read it, ſhe told me, "I might "be aſſured it ſpoke the language of his "ſoul; and it is (*added ſhe*) to the advanta-
"geous

"geous light in which he has set your cha-
"racter, it is intirely to that you are obliged,
"for the favourable opinion I have of you."

"Is it, indeed, to this generous man *(I "replied)* that I am indebted for the share I "have in your esteem? And can I return "such goodness with the vilest ingrati- "tude!"—Here I paused, still keeping a respectful distance.

Aspasia, with her eyes fixed on the ground, stood in a silent confusion: But, in this mute interval, imagine, if you can, what must be the conflict of my soul! I had spoke my last, an eternal silence must certainly have ensued, if the gentle *Aspasia*, perceiving my distress, had not put me out of pain for an apology.

"I see *(said she)* the disorder you are in: "This retreat of honour ought to have been "mine; I sincerely wish it had been so: "However, you have led me the way, and "I owe my recovery to your prudence."

"It was my importunity, Madam, *(repli- "ed I)* that drew you into this criminal en- "gagement; for which I am going to in- "flict on myself the severe penalty of see- "ing you no more."

"This was what I was just resolving, (answered the fair penitent) but you have gone before me in every step of virtue; we must indeed meet no more: Some disorder I feel gives me a pretence to retire immediately to my chamber; and you may leave this place early in the morning, with a proper excuse for not seeing me."

She was seated under a shade of jessamine, and appeared charming as the Queen of Love. My philosophy began to stagger, when she hastily rose, and left me in an agony of mind, which no words can express.

However, I had so much command of myself, as not to follow her: My reason exerted all it's powers; the Divinity within spoke with a commanding force, and bid the wild tempestuous passions be still: My soul obeyed the sacred dictates, while truth and friendship took full possession of my breast.

I hasted early the next morning from this dangerous place; and must own to you, this action has given me a pleasure in reflection, superior to all the gratifications of sense.

Yours, &c.

ALCANDER.



LETTER V.

To CARLOS: *From the ſame.*

AFTER your ſevereſt raillery on my conduct, I hope you will pardon me for being a reaſonable creature, and not inſiſt on my making an apology, for following the dictates of honour and gratitude. To your cooler thoughts, virtue may not, perhaps, appear ſo trivial and fantaſtick a thing; in your ſplenetick intervals, falſhood and treachery will probably loſe their charms, and put on an aſpect of horror and deformity; when the ſagacity of youth is paſt, and a few years have impared your underſtanding, you may grow ſuperſtitious, and be whimſical enough to fancy friendſhip and truth are words of the moſt ſacred importance; Since it is not impoſſible for you to fall into ſuch errors yourſelf, you ought to paſs a charitable cenſure on my principles and practice, hwoever different from your own.

I have

I have ventured to ſend you this careleſs tranſlation of *Taſſo's Enchanted Foreſt*. This beautiful fiction ſeems contrived to arm the ſoul with a noble reſolution in whatever occurence it's virtues are called into action. *Rinaldo*'s inflexibility, I hope, will keep me a little in countenance, though I have not the vanity to run a parallel between the young hero's exploit and mine.

Dear *Carlos*, adieu! be aſſured I am too much your friend to leave any method untried for your reformation.

ALCANDER.

The ENCHANTED FOREST.

[Taken from *Taſſo*'s JERUSALEM, Book XVIII.]

THE dawning light ſcarce hover'd in
the Eaſt,
When young *Rinaldo* left his wonted reſt;
Completely arm'd in all his martial pride,
A coſtly ſcarf was o'er his ſhoulders ty'd:
Unſeen he paſs'd along each ſilent tent,
And onward to the dreadful foreſt went.

'Twas now the ſeaſon when the ling'ring
night
Diſputes her empire with the riſing light;
A roſy bluſh here paints the doubtful morn,
There glimm'ring ſtars th' uncertain ſhades
adorn:
This ſcene the thoughtful hero entertain'd,
As on the ſteep of *Olivet* he gain'd;
The dawning luſtre, and declining night,
With various beauties entertain his ſight:
"Ye num'rous flaming lamps above, he
cries,
"Which deck the lofty temple of the ſkies!
"Thou ſun, whoſe face a golden ſplendour
wears!
"Thou ſilver moon, and all ye ſparkling
ſtars!
"What trifles to your glories are preferr'd!
"How little we celeſtial things regard!
"A ſparkling glance, the light'ning of a
"ſmile,
"Of heav'n itſelf our eaſy hearts beguile."
Thus reas'ning, he the ſacred hill aſcends,
And humbly there with decent rev'rence
bends;
Adoring, to the Eaſt, he turns his eyes,
His thoughts unbounded reach the inmoſt
ſkies.

Meanwhile the morn in golden veſtments
rose,
Her viſage with a bright vermilion glows;
New beams *Rinaldo*'s creſt and armour gild,
Which dart their luſtre o'er the verdant field;
Refreſhing breezes round him gently play,
And balmy odours on their wings convey;
While from her lap *Aurora* on his head
A cloud of pure celeſtial dews does ſhed;
Dipt in th' ethereal miſt, a lucid white
His robes diſplay, and ſtream with ſilver light:
Such when the morning's chearful rays ap-
pear,
Such lively looks the op'ning bloſſoms wear;
So looks, renew'd in all it's glitt'ring pride,
The ſerpent, when he caſts his age aſide.
The knight ſtill to the wood his way
purſu'd,
Nor any horror in it's proſpect view'd;
The fatal foreſt, whence with ſudden dread
The braveſt ſoldiers of the camp had fled,
Appears to him a kind inviting ſhade.
Advancing on, a ſoft melodious ſound
Fills all the fair enchanted grove around;
The noiſe of murm'ring currents rolling by,
With ſighing winds, which thro' the branches
fly;

The

The ſwan in dying melancholy ſtrains
In concert with the nightingale complains;
The organ, harp, and human voice, are found
Mingling their notes in one harmonious
ſound.
While from above, as others had before,
The youth expects to hear loud thunders
roar;
Inſtead of theſe, the ſongs of *Syrens* finds,
The chant of birds with warbling waves and
winds.
Amaz'd, he now his haſty ſteps ſuſpends,
And forward now with cautious paces bends;
No obſtacles his paſſage yet withſtood,
Beſides an ample, ſmooth, tranſparent flood,
From whence a thouſand riv'lets break away,
Which thro' the ſhades in wanton windings
ſtray;
Their banks were with luxuriant verdure
crown'd,
And painted flow'rs adorn'd the ſmiling
ground.
Rinaldo paus'd, when inſtantly appear'd
A ſtately bridge on golden arches rear'd,
Preſenting croſs the ſtream a ſpacious way,
Which he undaunted paſs'd without delay;
Nor ſooner touch'd the river's diſtant brinks,
But down the viſionary ſtructure ſinks;
And

And what before in gentle waves roll'd by,
A torrent ſwells, and lifts it's billows high:
No bounds the ſudden inundation knows,
Riſing like floods increas'd by melting ſnows.
The hero fearleſs ſtill his courſe purſues,
And whereſoe'er he turns, freſh wonder views;
For whereſoe'er he turns, a ſudden ſpring
Appears, and blooming flow'rs their odours bring;
The lily courts him, and the fragrant roſe
At his approach with brighter crimſon glows;
Their cryſtal arms the bubbling ſprings diſplay,
And living fountains open in his way;
The branchy trees their verdant pride renew,
From ev'ry leaf diſtils ambroſial dew;
The waters, winds, and tuneful birds again,
Join'd with the voice and lute, begin their ſoothing ſtrain;
Nor yet appears to whom the melting ſong,
The human voice, and charming lute belong.
Suſpended he remains, and ſcarce believes
His waking thoughts, or what his ſenſe perceives;
When iſſuing from the foreſt's lofty ſhade,
And finds an ample plain before him ſpread;
A wond'rous myrtle in the midſt appear'd;
Aloft in air it's ſtately head was rear'd;

It's

It's height the palm and cypress far surpast,
And all beneath a closer shadow cast:
Around the leafy arms extended wide,
It tow'ring stood, of all the grove the pride;
On the prodigious plant he fix'd his eyes,
'Till more prodigious things his mind surprize.

A pregnant oak with sudden rupture parts,
While from it's trunk a blooming virgin starts;
Numbers like her their hollow prisons rend,
And on the plain in shining robes descend.
So drest, the graceful *Cynthia* haunts the groves;
Such are her nymphs, and such the goddess moves.
Their folding vests above the knee were ty'd,
Their slender legs the silken buskins hide;
Their snowy arms were bare; their locks behind
Dishevel'd hung, and wanton in the wind:
Like these appear the beauteous sylvan race,
Who o'er the lawns the flying prey they trace;
No bows indeed they held, nor quivers wore,
But warbling lutes in their fair hands they bore;

A circle

A circle round the wond'ring knight they
made,
And danc'd in artful measures as they play'd.
"Hail, lovely youth! (they sung) our
"lady's care!
"For thee these soft recesses we prepare;
"For thee she fondly languishes all day,
"And wastes her life in restless fires away;
"These groves thy absence lately seem'd to
"mourn,
"But all look fresh and gay at thy return."
While with these melting strains they
charm his ears,
A sweeter voice he from the myrtle hears,
And issuing thence a lovelier nymph ap-
pears.
If antient times, with pious awe inspir'd,
Silenus in his antick form admir'd,
What had the superstitious dotage been,
The mad effect of this surprising scene!
Her shape was human, but a heav'nly grace,
And beauty all divine adorn'd her face.
With doubtful eyes *Rinaldo* views the fair,
And soon recalls *Armida*'s tempting air;
Then with a soft alluring pensive look,
Which meant a thousand tender things, she
spoke:

"Art

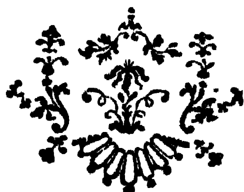
" Art thou return'd, the cause of all my
" pain?
" Do I behold these fatal eyes again?
" Dost thou, at last, ungrateful man! relent,
" And pity my fond youth in sorrow spent?
" Or as an enemy pursue me here?
" For this thy arms and threat'ning looks
" declare:
" But I no enemy, no traitor fear'd,
" When o'er the flood the golden bridge I
" rear'd;
" When gaudy flow'rs along thy path were
" strow'd,
" And living springs to entertain thee
" flow'd."
Approaching nearer then, she softly cries,
" Remove this envious helmet's vain dis-
" guise,
" And let me view again those charming
" eyes."

With that a moving tear she fondly shed,
While from her cheeks the hasty blushes fled;
Then sigh'd, and downward cast her lovely
eyes;
And soft complaints, and kind reproaches,
tries:
Her words the coldest adamant would move,
And melt the most obdurate heart to love.

The

The youthful hero feels the kindling ſires,
And timely from his dang'rous foe retires;
Again he ſcorns her wiles, and fiercely drew
His ſhining ſword, and at the myrtle flew
Armida runs before with eager haſte,
Then twining round her darling plant embrac'd;
"Oh ſtay, ſhe cries, ſtay thy inhuman hand,
"Or let thy weapon in my breaſt be ſtain'd."
Unmov'd and deaf to all her pray'rs he Stood,
And lifts his ſword to hew the fatal wood.
Th' enchantreſs ſoon another method tries,
And as in dreams uncouth chimeras riſe,
She ſtalks a monſtrous bulk before his eyes;
A duſky gloom her changing face o'erſpread;
Vaniſh'd the ſnowy white, and youthful red;
Then like *Briareus*, with his hundred hands,
A mighty giant in his view ſhe ſtands;
And fifty flaming ſwords at once ſhe wields,
And ſhakes aloft as many blazing ſhields;
Her nymphs appear like horrid *Cyclops* arm'd,
But nothing his undaunted heart alarm'd.
The martial youth his ſounding ſtrokes renew'd,
While hollow groans the ſounding ſtrokes enſu'd;
Stu-

Stupendous terrors fill'd the darken'd place,
Resembling now the black infernal space;
Thunder'd the louring heav'ns with dreadful
found,
Echo'd in subterranean vaults the ground;
Trembled the earth, lighten'd the flashing
skies,
While warring winds from every quarter
rise,
Rinaldo stands the raging tempest's frown,
'Till one fierce stroke fells the tall myrtle
down;
Th' enchantment ends, the phantoms disap-
pear,
The storms were hush'd, the heav'ns serenely
clear.





LETTER VI.

To ALBANUS.

YOU ſeem at preſent ſuſpended between virtue and vice; your mind is in ſuch a myſterious ſitu tion, that it is not eaſy to determine to what claſs you belong: One can hardly call you a ſaint, the flattery would be too apparent; and yet it would be a little uncharitable to put you in the opposite rank, where your own modeſty has placed you: But my buſineſs is not to diſpute what you are, but to give you the information you deſire, and from my own experience to reſolve on which ſide the advantage of pleaſure falls.

You imagine I have acted in both the characters of ſaint and ſinner, and tried the extremes of virtue and vice: In the laſt I am too much experienced; but this makes me more capable of paſſing a cenſure; for I was

I was a sort of philosophick libertine, and pursued pleasure for the sake of demonstration; I paused, I reasoned, I made critical reflections on every enjoyment; I proposed something beyond gratifying a low and sensual inclination; mine was a deliberate search after happiness; while the method was wrong, my end was right; but every guilty experiment brought it's own conviction, and left me restless and disappointed.

Sometimes I exclaimed in prose, sometimes in verse; I burlesqued the vanities of life, and the weakness of human nature; I turned moralist, looked grave, and acted soberly: But this was a situation too cold for my temper, it was neither sleeping nor wakeing; this supine indolence was but a poor exchange for the jovial activities I had resigned, nor could I assent to that spiritless maxim, that *virtue was its own reward*, if there was no future expectation:—*Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die*, appeared to me a much more rational conclusion.

However, this deliberation, this pause, this moral essay and restraint of my passions, was the first step I made towards real happiness: In the absence of sensual amusements, my

my thoughts found leisure for a nobler application; my soul grew familiar with itself, and sought acquaintance with intellectual beings; distressed with the vicissitude of mortal things, it traced back it's own divine original, and claimed paternal refuge from the great Spring of all existence: I felt the attraction strong as the bands of nature; that felicity I had blindly sought, the unknown God I had ignorantly worshipped, now revealed himself to me, as the sovereign good, and my peculiar bliss.

How an almighty Agent acts, no language of men can describe; but I felt the sacred influence, I heard the heavenly sound, the soft melodious voice, calling me away from earthly vanities; while a ray of celestial beauty, sparkling on my soul, eclipsed the glories of the world, and darkened all the pride of nature; the mists of ignorance and error vanished before the divine illumination, which, with a pleasing evidence, compelled my assent to the glorious truths it proposed; my apprehensions were enlarged, and a sanctity of disposition infused; those heights of virtue, which I once thought impracticable, now appeared easy, and attended with ineffable

effable delight, ſuch as gave me ſome delicious prelibat ions

Of thoſe immortal banquets, thoſe rich draughts
Of vital pleaſure, which my thirſty ſoul
Shall drink for ever in ———

These are no fantaſtick deluſions, but real and divine enjoyments, ſuch as enlarge the mind, and give it a nobler diſpoſition, while, conſcious of it's own grandeur, it reſts in nothing below boundleſs and immortal felicity.

This is what you ſeem anxiouſly to inquire after: How happy ſhall I be, if my experience can direct you in ſuch an important ſearch! You will excuſe the ſending you theſe negligent lines on a ſubject ſo ſuperior to my genius.

On HAPPINESS.

WHATEVER diff'rent paths mankind purſue,
Oh, *Happineſs*, 'tis thee we keep in view!
'Tis thee in ev'ry action we intend,
The nobleſt motive, and ſuperior end!

 Thou

Thou doſt the ſcarcely-finiſh'd ſoul incline;
It's firſt deſire, and conſcious thought, is thine;
Our infant breaſts are ſway'd by thee alone,
When pride and jealouſy are yet unknown.
Thro' life's obſcure and wild variety,
Our ſtedfaſt wiſhes never ſtart from thee:
Thou art of all our waking thoughts the theme,
We court thee too in ev'ry nightly dream:
Th' immortal flame with equal ardour glows,
Nor one ſhort moment's intermiſſion knows:
Whether to courts or temples we repair,
With reſtleſs zeal we ſearch thee ev'ry-where;
Whether the roads that to perdition lead,
Or thoſe which guide us to the ſtars we tread,
Thine is the hope, th' ineſtimable prize,
The glorious mark on which we fix our eyes!
Thy charms th' enamour'd libertine entice,
Thro' all the wild deſtructive paths of vice;
Th' advent'rous man refines on ſin, and makes
In ſearch of thee, to hell new-beaten tracks;
Enchanting pleaſure dances in his ſight,
And tempts him forward by a treach'rous light:
But while thy flatt'ring ſmiles his thoughts inflame,
Thou prov'ſt to him a mere fantaſtick name,
A fair deluſion, and a pleaſing cheat,
A gaudy viſion, and a ſoft deceit;

Which while the wretch purſues with eager pace,
And ſeems to overtake thee in the race,
An airy phantom mocks his cloſe embrace;
His arms in vain the ſportive ſhade would fold;
Still like a gliding ghoſt it ſlips his fondeſt hold:
The diſappointment heightens yet his rage,
And tempts him with freſh ardour to engage;
Succeſsleſs, but unweary'd in the ſtrife,
He ſtill purſues thee to the verge of life;
With life compell'd his dotage to reſign,
The laſt deſpairing ſigh he breathes is thine
The pious man directs his vows to thee,
And proves thy moſt pathetick votary.
Virtue itſelf, ev'n virtue he regards,
But as thy favour the fatigue rewards:
To ſilent ſhades, and ſolitude obſcure,
Far from the world thou doſt his ſteps allure;
But there he lives retir'd, a glorious Epicure,
And gladly quits the fleeting joys of ſenſe
In ſearch of bliſs more laſting and intenſe;
Not ſuch as the fond lover's heart beguiles,
When without art his yielding miſtreſs ſmiles;
Not ſuch as fills the youthful hero's mind,
When wreaths of victory his temples bind:
His thoughts a nobler luxury would prove,
Such as the bleſs'd immortals know above;

A ſpark divine like theirs his breaſt inflames,
Enjoyments all divine like theirs he claims,
Licentious and unbounded in his aims.
To pleaſure's ſacred ſpring his ſoul aſpires,
There only hopes to quench his infinite deſires:
Not envious hell the paſſion can ſuppreſs,
Fir'd by thy name, alluring *Happineſs!*
Undaunted he maintains the generous ſtrife,
And ſtruggles for thee to the cloſe of life;
Then joyful claſps thee in his dying arms,
And yields his breath, poſſeſs'd of all thy charms.

This is the concluſion, to which I ſtand, after the exacteſt trial of ſenſual and intellectual pleaſures; without heſitation I give my voice on the ſide of virtue, and this is the gayeſt period of my life, unruffled with adverſity or diſappointment, in the affluence of fortune, and the luxury of youth, with a mind capacious of bliſs, and panting after happineſs.

In this ſituation you cannot object againſt the ſeverity of my temper: However, as few perſons care to be wiſe at other people's expence, I cannot expect, that without any farther trial, you will acquieſce in the judgement of

Your moſt humble Servant.



LETTER VII.

To LUCIUS.

IT was you that propofed this fubject to my mufe, but I have hardly the vanity to hope the performance will pleafe a judgement fo exact as yours. However, it is intirely fubmitted to your cenfure, by

Your moft humble Servant,

LINDAMOR.

A POEM *on* LOVE.

ASSIST my doubtful mufe, propitious love,
Let all my foul the facred impulfe prove:
For thine's a holy unpolluted flame,
Howe'er the libertine profanes thy name;
Howe'er, with impious cant, hypocrify
And fenfelefs fuperftition blemifh thee:

The pure reſult of ſober reaſon thou ;
Thy laws the ſtricteſt honour muſt allow :
Thy laws each vicious thought controul ;
From thee devotion takes it's flaming wings,
Thou giv'ſt the nobleſt motion to the ſoul,
And govern'ſt all it's ſprings.
To great attempts thou gen'rous minds doſt move,
And only ſuch are privileg'd to love ;
Th' heroick race, the brighteſt names of old,
Were all thy glorious votaries enroll'd.

Without thee, human life
A tedious round of circling cares would be
A curs'd fatigue, continual ſtrife,
And tireſome vanity.
Thy charms our reſtleſs grief controul,
And calm the ſtormy motions of the ſoul ;
Before thee pride and enmity,
With all infernal paſſions, fly ;
And could'ſt thou in the realms below
But once diſplay thy beauteous face,
The damn'd a ſhort redreſs might know,
And ev'ry terror fly the place.
From thee one bright unclouded ſmile
Would all the torments there beguile ;

Thy

Thy ſmiles th' eternal tempeſts could aſ-
ſuage,
And make the damn'd forget their rage;
The ſulph'rous waves would ceaſe to roar,
And calmly glide along the ſilent ſhore.
Had *Orpheus* (as 'tis fabled) thro' the
ground
To hell the gloomy paſſage found,
His warbling voice, his melting lyre,
Nor artful touches on the trembling ſtring,
Had ne'er obtain'd his bold deſire,
Nor charm'd the furies with their ſullen
King:
But love, his tender theme, had love been
nam'd,
That potent ſound alone had all their malice
tam'd.

On thee the graces and delights attend,
On thy propitious influence
Our gayeſt hours depend;
Whatever charms the ſoul or ſenſe,
Beauty and ſacred harmony,
Accompliſh'd love! belongs to thee.
To thee his ſhining graces *Strephon* owes
His juſt ideas, and expreſſions fit;
To thee *Cleora* owes that ſprightly wit,
Which from her lips in eaſy language flows.

The mute creation owns thy ſway,
And things inanimate thy laws obey;
At thy command the firſt confuſion ceas'd,
Chaos and wild diſorder were appeas'd;
Diſcord and fierce antipathy grew mild,
The gleams of light thro' yielding darkneſs ſmil'd,
And warring elements were reconcil'd.
Nature begun a ſteady courſe,
Govern'd by central charms, and ſympathetick force.

But in the bliſsful ſkies alone
Almighty love! thy pow'r is fully known:
There they view thy charming face,
Painted with endleſs ſmiles, and ever blooming grace,
Thy gentle torch burns there for ever bright,
And ſcatters round a mild propitious light;
All feel it's pleaſing influence,
While pure deſires thy golden ſhafts diſpenſe.

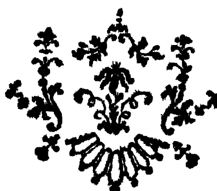
Th' immortal lovers, crown'd with fragrant flow'rs,
In roſy ſhades, and bliſsful bow'rs,
To thee devote their happy hours,

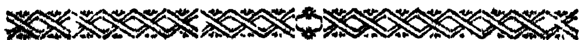
While

While active joys, too noble for disguise,
And vital pleasures, sparkle in their eyes;
To thee alone, great love, their heav'n they owe,
The boundless source whence all their blessings flow.
Thy sacred flame
Does ev'ry heav'nly breast inspire,
And tune the strings of each celestial lyre;
In flow'ry vales, to every blissful stream,
With melting notes, they celebrate thy name;
Backward they roll the long extent
Of ages infinite, and sing thy great descent.

No fabled *Venus* gave thee birth
At *Cyprus*; yet the goddess was not nam'd,
Nor at *Idalia*, nor at *Paphos* fam'd:
Nor yet was feign'd from foaming seas to rise;
For yet no seas appear'd, or fountains flow'd,
Nor yet distinguish'd in the skies,
Her radiant planet glow'd.
But thou wast long ere motion sprung its race,
Ere chaos and immeasurable space
Resign'd their useless rights to elemental place;

Before the ſparkling lamps on high
Were kindled up, and hung around the ſky
Before the ſun led on the circling hours,
Or vital ſeeds produc'd their active pow'rs;
Before the firſt intelligences ſtrung
Their golden harps, and ſoft preludiums ſung
To Love, the mighty cauſe whence their exiſtence ſprung,
Th' ineffable DIVINITY
His own reſemblance meets in thee:
By this thy glorious lineage thou doſt prove
Thy high Deſcent; for God himſelf is *Love*.





LETTER VIII.

From SYLVIANA, *giving on account of her Manner of Life before her Marriage with the Earl of*———.

MADAM,

YOUR curiofity is very obliging, in defiring to know my manner of life, 'till I had the honour of being married to my Lord——. The account, indeed, would be perfectly infignificant without that circumftance; it is only my relation to him, that gives me a concern for the decorum and propriety of my conduct, in the high ftation to which he has advanced me.

I muft own, that my fcrupulous diffent from fome fafhionable freedoms, makes my behaviour appear fomewhat fingular and precife, among the gallant part of the world: But I hope, in this general Toleration, I may, with indemnity, be a Chriftian (tho'

(tho' not a prude) at ſixteen. If this is an error, the prejudice of education muſt be my excuſe, which keeps me from giving my aſſent to many of the genteel maxims of the age: Nor will you be ſurprized at my nicety, when you know by what precepts the early part of my life has been governed.

My father was a country clergyman, a perſon of exemplary piety, who, with a benefice of three hundred a year, treated his poor pariſhioners with great hoſpitality, and made a decent proviſion for his own family.

My mother was bred a diſſenter, and continued ſuch, 'till either her eſteem for my father, or the force of his arguments, prevailed with her to join in communion with the national church.

I was the eldeſt of three daughters, which were all the children they had; we were carefully inſtructed in the rules of juſtice and truth, and bred in the greateſt ſanctity of manners; no excuſe but ſickneſs ever detained us on *Sundays* from the publick worſhip; nor were the intervals ſpent in any idle amuſements; the whole day was ſacred, and obſerved with juſt ſolemnity; through the reſt of the week, prayers were conſtantly read

mornings and evenings in the family; nor would my mother ever ſuffer cards or dancing in the houſe.

My two ſiſters were the pretties demure things that ever were ſeen; they applied themſelves with great diligence to aſſiſt my mother in any of her domeſtick concerns: But my temper being more ſprightly, houſewifery and plain-work were my averſion; reading was my prevailing attachment, and I had turned over every book in my father's library, except *Latin* and *Greek*: But here was not one play or novel for my entertainment; however, I was ſupplied with amuſements of this kind by my Lady *Wortby*'s youngeſt daughter, who was our neighbour, and was pleaſed to honour me with ſome degree of intimacy. But I peruſed theſe authors with great ſecreſy, and not without ſome inward remorſe; this ſort of reading being againſt my Father's ſevere injunctions, and the pious rules I had been taught.

This was my manner of life 'till I was fifteen, when a brother of my mother's, a *Turkey* merchant, died, and having no child, left me twenty thouſand pounds, with only ſome ſmall legacies to my ſiſters. This advance

vance of fortune gave me ſome diſtinction with my Lady *Wortby*, who, about the ſame time had a fine ſummer-houſe painting; the ſtory was, *Diana* hunting with her nymphs. Her Ladyſhip deſired my mother, that I might be drawn for one of the virgin train.

Some time after this painting was finiſhed, my Lord —— came accidentally into theſe parts of the country; and waiting on my Lady *Wortby*; as they were in the ſummer-houſe, he took particular notice (I know not why) of the nymph for whom I had ſat to the painter. Her Ladyſhip, finding my Lord a little inquiſitive, ordered a ſervant to call me to drink tea with them: I obey-ed, without the leaſt ſuſpicion what was the motive of her command.

I had hitherto looked on every mortal man with equality and indifference; nor found any thing to anſwer the deſcription of poetical heroes, and dramatick beaus: But the moment I ſaw my Lord, every grace, every charm, appeared real, which before had pleaſed my imagination in agreeable fictions: The enchanting form, the fatal glance, the reſiſtleſs ſmile, the gentle, the prevailing ac-cent; Love, with his whole artillery, ſeemed to

to inſult me, and never more intirely ſubdued a mind ſo artleſs and unexperienced: However, to conceal my diſorder, I withdrew as ſoon as the company would permit.

But how transformed was my ſoul from that guiltleſs calm I had 'till now enjoyed! The equality of my temper was broken, my thoughts had all a different turn; I went to church, indeed, but ſaid my prayers as mechanically as the clock ſtrikes; I joined in ſinging the pſalms, but with no more underſtanding than the chimes repeat a tune to which they are ſet: not only the next world but this, was effaced from my memory; there were no flowers in the field, nor ſtars in the ſky; my whole attention was fixed on the lovely youth, his idea was ſtill in view; or if any other object interrupted the pleaſing reverie, it was only to give me vexation: I was angry with every mortal, for not looking ſo handſome, nor talking ſo agreeably, as the charming man I admired.

I was ſome tedious days in ſuſpenſe, whether my Lord had one favourable thought of me; but my doubts were agreeably ſatisfied, when I found he had deſired my Lady *Worthy* to procure my father's conſent,

ſent, in order to make his addreſſes to me: My father embraced the offer with a juſt ſenſe of the honour that was done him.

For my part, I had never practiſed any diſguiſe, and was unacquainted with all forms, but ſuch as were the dictates of nature and virtue; nor was it poſſible for me to conceal the tender inclination; it was as viſible in my ſilence, as the moſt pathetick words could have made it. After I knew my Lord's character, and was convinced of his affection for me, I had a ſort of vanity in owning a ſenſe of his merit, this, I thought, juſtified the height of my paſſion, nor could I find any reaſon to violate my native ſincerity, and affect indifference, where it would have been a crime to have been really inſenſible.

My noble lover expreſſed ſome impatience to conclude the affair, which was done with great ſecreſy and expedition. He ſuffered but one ſervant to attend him, and was ſo obliging, to ſtay a month after our marriage in my father's family: The ſcenes of low life were a diverting novelty to him, while love and innocence made the hours glide ſmoothly on. This period was all paſtoral and romantick; the golden age ſeemed to be renewed with.

with *Ovid's* OENONE: I could have wiſhed the noble youth diveſted of his hereditary honours, poſſeſſed only of a ſnowy flock, and graced with no diſtinction, but that of the *Lovely Swain.*

Then unmoleſted we had liv'd, and free
From thoſe vexatious forms which greatneſs brings;
While rocks and meadows, ſhades, and purling ſprings,
The flow'ry valley, and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no ſuperior name to Love.

However, I did not yet know the toils of grandeur, nor feel the effects of my ſplendid vaſſalage; I lived my own way, dreſſed and undreſſed myſelf. My mother, ſince the advance of my fortune, had kept me in fine lace caps, and clean ſilk night-gowns; and, as I had plenty of flaxen hair falling into natural curls, my dreſs was eaſily adjuſted, and ſeemed to pleaſe my Lord exceedingly. The little waiting on I had, was by *Cicely*, my mother's head ſervant; I had no notion of the *Grande Monde*, nor the part I was to act in it.

I had never ſeen *London*; the *Mall*, *Hyde-park*, the *Drawing-Room*, and *Theatre*, were leſs known to me than the planetary worlds.

In this ſtate of nature, of darkneſs, and original ſimplicity, imagine to yourſelf what muſt be my perplexity, when my Lord carried me with him to make my firſt appearance in town, among the congratulations of his numerous friends! I found myſelf among a rank of people, to whoſe language, habits, and manners, I was as much a ſtranger, as if I had been in a foreign country.

My Lord had deſired a ſiſter, who lived with him, to procure every thing proper for me to appear with, and ſhe ſpared no coſt in jewels, or whatever elſe vanity itſelf could wiſh; ſhe had been ſolicitous in her choice of a woman and chamber-maid for me, and they were really two of the fineſt people I had ever ſeen in my life: My woman (being much older than myſelf) I looked on her as my ſuperior, and could hardly forbear makeing an apology for the trouble I gave her: I ſpoke to her in very gentle and ſubmiſſive terms; nor was it poſſible for me to get rid of the ſecret veneration, which the gravity of her countenance gave me: However, my lively

lively temper was apt to make ſome gay excurſions; when I was at firſt initiated into the myſteries of dreſs, I was not quite ſo ſerious, as ſhe ſeemed to think the importance of the affair required.

While my head was dreſſing, I was merely paſſive, as long as Mrs. *Dupin* ſuffered me to ſit reading: I left the ball on my ſhoulders to be adorned as ſhe thought fit; which, after two hours toil, I ſometimes found ſwelled to ſuch an enormous ſize, with flowers, feathers, and bits of ribbon, that I could not help begging her to reduce it to a dimenſion more agreeable to my ſhape, which, being ſlender, did not require a globe of that magnitude to adorn it.

But I was generally more inclined to cry than laugh on this occaſion: The hours thus ſpent were an inſupportable fatigue to me, nor could I anſwer to my conſcience for ſuch a vain expence of time; my being had a ſuperior end; I was formed for immortality, which grand concern forbid me ſpending more hours at the toilet than in my devotions: I had been taught theſe antiquated maxims; and however ridiculous they might appear in the gay moments of health, the approaches of death, I knew, would ſet them

in their full force, and unqueſtioned evidence.

However, I had no deſign in dreſſing, but to pleaſe my Lord; it was only with regard to him, I was concerned for the figure I made in publick: The flattery I heard on my beauty, gave me more confuſion than joy; nor could I account for the deſign of thoſe addreſſes.

I very innocently told a beau that followed me, that I was married; at which he burſt into a loud laugh: It was ſome ſurprize to me to find him ſo gay at the diſcovery of what I thought would have ſunk him into deſpair; I could not but wonder, that the man who had juſt before been languiſhing and dying, ſhould be ſo overjoyed, to find his pretenſions loſt, and his caſe hopeleſs; for I really thought he made love with an honeſt intention to marry me, only he had miſtaken my circumſtances.

My next lover was the moſt intimate friend my Lord had; the fine things he ſaid, I took for raillery: Indeed, it appeared ill jeſting with ſuch a ſacred thing as friendſhip, and the honour of a family: However, I concealed his extravagance, and treated him with a coldneſs

nefs fo real and unaffected, that he foon recovered himfelf.

But you may eafily imagine what a found thefe gallant propofals muft have, to one fo unacquainted with the modifh world, and who had never heard thofe vices named, but with terms of infamy and reproach.

After this account of myfelf, you will not wonder to find me fo little at eafe in the high ftation to which I am raifed: With what regret do I look back to the inglorious fhades, the humble fcenes of my paft tranquillity! I was a ftranger to ambition; but love feduced me from thofe peaceful retreats, where my firft happy days were fpent; it is only my affection for my Lord, that helps me to fupport this illuftrious bondage, this fplendid mifery: But as fincerely as I love him, I cannot, without a figh, recall the harmlefs freedom, the unmolefted innocence, in which the earlieft part of my life was paft; and am furprized to find myfelf the object of moft people's envy, while, in reality, I merit their compaffion. I am, without ceremony,

MADAM,

Yours, &c.

Shall ſhortly ſhrowd my humble head,
And mix with them among the dead.

I am now reconciling myſelf to theſe gloomy abodes; I would grow familiar, I would contract an intimacy with death, in order to meet the griſly phantom without conſternation.

But what I am here contemplating, is only the dark ſide of the proſpect, which diſappears whenever my thoughts turn to the bright reverſe: Death is then no more a meagre ſkeleton, followed with a train of terrors, but comes in an angel's form, with a gay retinue of heavenly loves and graces; he comes the kind meſſenger of my liberty and happineſs, with a ſmiling aſpect, beckoning me away from theſe ſtormy regions, to the worlds of unclouded light: The ſcenes of immortality are opened before me; the palm, the ſtarry crown, with all the bright rewards of virtue, appear in view: Oh, when will the happy period come, which ends this mortal ſtory! But my friendſhip for you ſhall outlive the date of this tranſitory exiſtence, and be the ſame, when I am no more, after the formalities of this lower world.

Your humble Servant.



LETTER. X.

To Lady ——; from a Sylph.

YOU will find this Letter on a bank of violets, where I have often the pleasure to seat myself near you, unseen; and never fail of being entertained with that vivacity and innocent wit, that sparkles in your conversation. However negligent you are of your invisible admirer, your earliest part of life has been my care; my services claim the pre-eminence of all my mortal rivals, and give me a right to make my pretensions, before your heart admits an earthly passion.

I have followed your early rambles over the flowery lawns, guarded you on the verge of murmuring streams, and screened your beauty from the sultry noon; I have fanned you with my golden plumes, and breathed the fragrance of the spring about you: By me the musick of the groves has been improved, while I have joined with the

the feathered chorus to divert you; the nightingale, for you, has prolonged her melodious ſtrain, and from ſome flowery ſpray entertained you with her nightly ſerenade.

Theſe harmleſs gallantries, inſtead of moleſting, have indulged your tranquillity; for mine is an affection ſuited to your guiltleſs inclination, and conſiſtent with the moſt refined virtue. Indeed, this is the ſuperior charm, the powerful attraction, that has gained you a celeſtial lover; thoſe divine graces, thoſe ſparklings of goodneſs and generoſity, that ſacred impreſſion of virtue heaven has ſtamped on your ſoul, charm me beyond your lovely perſon; and yet I view your blooming beauty with delight, and find a guiltleſs tranſport in your ſmiles: I am captivated with thoſe looks of benevolence and peace, which ſcatter univerſal joy and alacrity about you; the guiltleſs gaiety of your temper, and inoffenſive wit, divert me; I love to mimick the ſweetneſs of your voice, and repeat the charming accent in a thouſand ſportive echoes.

Were not the view of ethereal beauty forbidden to any of mortal race, I might inſult all human vanity, and defy the moſt glorious

rival

rival among the ſons of men; was I permitted to appear in the roſy bloom of celeſtial youth, with my golden zone, my purple wings, and glittering tiara, I ſhould outſhine the moſt ſplendid birth-night beau.

But I am not permitted to convince you of my ſuperiority, 'till your date of mortal life is expired, and then if you continue ſtedfaſt to the rules of virtue, you ſhall be mine by all the engagements of celeſtial love; I will lead you in triumph to the bliſsful fields, and charming bowers, ſurpaſſing the moſt poetical deſcription of *Cyprian* groves, or *Heſperian* gardens: What you call palaces, and magnificent ſeats, are but dens, but dwellings in the duſt, compared to the dazzling habitations of the aërial race; the region is for ever calm, the ſkies for ever unclouded:

No ſtormy winter enters there,
'Tis jovial ſpring through all the year:
Soft gales through groves of myrtle blow,
The ſtreams o'er golden pebbles flow;
Freſh youth and love their ſportive train
Lead o'er the ever verdant plain;
Ethereal forms in bright array
Along the bliſsful currents ſtray;

Or wander thro' Elysian *groves,*
Or banquet in the gay alcoves;
And oft in amaranthine bow'rs
Repose on fragrant beds of flow'rs,
While musick with her soothing strains
Warbles thro' the woods and plains:
The hills, the dales, and fountains round,
With heav'n'y harmony resound.

But numbers fail, human language loses it's energy, and grows insipid, while I would paint the wonders of the immortal world; neither can I describe, nor will you be able to conceive, these transporting scenes, 'till the happy time comes when they shall be unveiled in surprising pomp before you. 'Till then, I am

Your invisible Admirer,

ARIEL





LETTER XI.

To EUSEBIUS.

IT is with great pleasure I obey you, in discovering the present situation of my thoughts, since the tranquillity I enjoy in this retirement, is partly owing to those pious principles you endeavoured to instill into my early youth.

You was well informed of my passion for Lady *Diana*——; nor can you have forgot how many excuses I framed to my father, to prevent his design of sending me into foreign parts, 'till all events succeeded to my wish, and I was married to the charming maid: But the nuptial pomp was hardly past, before death blasted my happiness, and snatched the lovely prize from my arms.

The only way I could then think of, to divert the violence of my grief, was travelling, hoping by variety of objects to efface the painful impression: Accordingly, I made

the tour of *France* and *Italy*, amusing myself with whatever was grand or entertaining; I conversed with men of sense and merit, and sometimes was favoured with the society of women of distinguished beauty and reputation; I indulged myself in all the little gaieties of life, within the limits of reason and morality; but nothing could blot the image of my charming wife from my soul, I brought back my affection for the fair departed saint to the mournful mansion where I enjoyed and lost her.

But here leisure and reflection had a better effect than a thoughtless series of diversions: Tho' my course of life had always been regular, and governed by the rules of sobriety, yet 'till now I was a stranger (except in form) to any thing of devotion, nor had ever experienced the ineffable satisfaction of a virtuous mind in it's secret addresses to the Supreme Being. My soul had not yet reflected on it's own grandeur, nor considered itself formed for an infinite and unchangeable felicity.

Those grave and sublime authors, which were once the useless ornaments of my library, are now my serious entertainment; by

by these I have been directed to look beyond all the perishing scenes of nature, to that immutable state of happiness, which after a short probation attends the practice of virtue: My thoughts grow calm, my passions appeased, the goods and evils of time vanish into nothing at the prospect of boundless and immortal pleasure.

The great temple of the skies, the spangled arch of heaven, is frequently the place of my devotion; the open view of the gay creation, or the lonely solitude of a wood, inspire me with a sacred warmth: But, oh! when the propitious divinity, by some divine emanation, makes me sensible of his presence, with what contempt do I look back on the lessening world! how tasteless, how insipid, are all it's amusements! how calm, how peaceful, in those happy intervals, are the regions of my soul! it's wishes are answered, and all it's desires appeased: I have enough, I ask no more: Can they languish for the streams, who drink at the overflowing fountain? His benignity is better than life, immortal pleasure is in his smiles, and who he favours must be necessarily blessed.

Thus abſtracted from human things, I converſe with the great Spirit of the univerſe, and in the rapture of my thoughts often addreſs him in ſuch ſoliloquies as theſe:

"It is the dignity of my nature, oh Su-
"preme of beings, to adore and praiſe thee!
"But how art thou to be extolled by mortal
"man? the language of Paradiſe, the ſtrains
"of immortality, fall ſhort of thy perfecti-
"ons; the firſt-born ſons of light loſe them-
"ſelves in bliſsful admiration, in ſearch of
"thy excellency; even they with ſilent
"ecſtaſy adore, while, veiled with ineffable
"ſplendour,

"*The bright, the bleſs'd Divinity, is known,*
"*And comprehended, by himſelf alone.*

"Who can conceive the extent of that
"power, which out of nothing brought ma-
"terials for a riſing world, and from a
"gloomy chaos bid the harmonious uni-
"verſe appear!

"*Confuſion heard his voice, and wild uproar*
"*Stood rul'd, ſtood vaſt infinitude confin'd.*"

MILTON.

"At

" At thy word the pillars of the ſky were " framed, and it's beauteous arches reared; " thy breath kindled the ſtars, adorned the " moon with ſilver rays, and gave the ſun " its flaming ſplendour.

" *Thy glory in her ſilent courſe the moon,*
" *And nightly lamps in their obſcure ſojourn,*
" *The morning ſtar with it's bright circle* " *crown'd,*
" *And early bluſhes of the day, reveal;*
" *The circling ſun thy greatneſs manifeſts,*
" *Whether aſcending from the eaſtern wave,*
" *With glancing ſmiles he chears the dewy fields;*
" *Or mounted to the zenith's lofty height,*
" *He blazes with tranſcendent glory round;*
" *Or down the ſteep of heav'n he rolls amain,*
" *And ends his flaming progreſs in the ſea:*
" *From eaſt to weſt thy grandeur he proclaims,*
" *And thro his radiant kingdoms ſpreads thy* " *praiſe.*

" Thou didſt prepare for the waters their " capacious bed, and ſet bounds to the ra- " ging billows; by thee the hills were " crowned with plenty, and the valleys " dreſſed in their flowery pride; the ſummer " and winter, the ſhady night, and the

" bright revolutions of the day, are thine;
" in all the wonderful effects of nature, we
" adore and confess thy power.

" *Thou rid'st upon the wild tempestuous wind,*
" *And flying storms obey thy potent voice;*
" *Sublime on clouds thy dark pavilion set,*
" *With shades and gloomy majesty involv'd;*
" *Thy hands the pointed lightnings lance around,*
" *While peals of thunder shake the firmament;*
" *At thy approach the kindling forests smoke,*
" *And from their base the trembling mountains*
" *start;*
" *The rivers ebb and flow at thy command,*
" *Observe their wonted course, or run reverse;*
" *At thy rebuke the frighted waves divide,*
" *And with stupendous motion backward roll*
" *Their crystal volumes to their inmost spring.*
" *Thou all things canst; thy mighty mandate*
" *heard,*
" *Necessity and nature are no more;——*
" *Th' obedient elements resign their league,*
" *And wonderful effects attest the God!*"

These, my dear friend, are the entertainments that brighten my solitude, and free my soul from it's former engagements; those fading graces, on which I once doted, vanish before a superior excellence, as stars before the

the rifing fun; inftead of repining, I adore, I juftify the great difpenfing Power, that has removed the darling of my affections to fix them on immortal beauty. I have loft nothing amiable or attractive, but what is found with divine advantage in the fair Original.

I know you will congratulate me on this happy change; it muft pleafe you to find that your pious inftructions, joined to the fanctity of your example, have not been intirely loft on,

Reverend SIR,

Your moft obedient humble Servant,

AMINTOR.





LETTER XII.

To the same.

SIR,

I Have obeyed your commands, in sending the inclosed; you will not require an apology for an essay on this transporting subject; joy and gratitude will speak, however disproportioned the expressions.

On our Saviour's *Nativity.*

VICTORIOUS Love! how uncontroul'd thy pow'r!
How great thy triumph, on that glorious hour!
The high-rais'd thrones above look'd down to see
The vanquish'd God a captive led by thee:
His splendour in mortality disguis'd,
The principalities of heav'n surpriz'd;
Th' indulgent skies smil'd on the happy birth,
While peace and joyful wonder hush'd the earth.

I Fly,

Fly, rigid winter, with thy horrid face,
And let the soft and lovely spring take place;
Oh! come thou fairest season of the year,
With garlands deck'd and verdant robes, appear;
At once produce the summer's various cost,
Whatever sweets her flow'ry stores can boast:
Full canisters of *Sharon*'s roses spread,
And dress with art th' illustrious infant's bed;
Rifle the gardens, search the painted fields,
For all the blooming glories nature yields.
But, O ye products of the earth, how poor,
To heav'n's enamel'd plains, are all your store!
Perpetual greens, and never-fading flow'rs,
Enrich with soft perfumes th' immortal bow'rs;
And yet he left the bright ethereal seats,
For these cold regions and obscure retreats.
Be hush'd, ye winds, no angry tempest rove;
But sink in gentle whispers thro' the grove:
With all *Arabia* load your balmy wings,
And breathe the fragrance of ten thousand springs.

Begin,

Begin, you ſweet muſicians of the air!
Let nature all her ſoothing ſounds prepare;
Let tuneful art her various meaſures bring,
Each melting tone, and ev'ry warbling ſtring;
Let pſalt'ries, harps, and the loud cymbal ring:
Let the ſhrill trumpets raiſe their ſprightly voice,
While *Carmel*, and high *Lebanon*, rejoice.
He comes, O *Jacob*, thy long-promis'd King!
Celeſtial envoys the glad tidings bring:
O'er earth's wide compaſs to the diſtant main,
With truth and perfect juſtice, he ſhall reign.
The ſparkling ſkies ſhall tarniſh and decay,
The ſun be quench'd, the ſtars ſhall fade away;
But he ſhall riſe with a propitious light,
Stand at high-noon, and ſhine divinely bright.

I ſhall now leave you to your own ſublimer contemplation on this unbounded theme, and ſubſcribe myſelf,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

AMINTOR.



LETTER XIII.

To a Gentleman in France, *from his Sifter; giving him a Relation of her Lover's Misfortunes.*

My dear Brother,

AS my paffion for *Valerius* had in it's beginning your approbation, you will not blame my conftancy at a juncture when the unhappy youth has no other confolation: His misfortunes have brought thofe virtues into view, which in the height of profperity he never found occafion to exert; and as his merit rifes, you will not reproach me, in finding my attachment to him more fteady and refolved, than in the fplendour of his fortune.

You know how much my father piques himfelf on his quality, and how averfe he was, when you left us, to *Valerius*'s propofal, on no other account but his being a citizen, though a man of great virtue and wealth: However, this laft motive, after fome

some deliberation, prevailed; I was suffered to receive his addresses, and every thing was preparing to celebrate the marriage.

Valerius had always behaved himself in so obsequious a manner to his father, that he put a considerable stock into his hands, which the young merchant had improved, by two or three successful voyages into *Turkey*; so that it was in his power to make a settlement vastly above my fortune, and far beyond my father's expectation: But while the lawyers were busy in drawing up the articles, an unexpected misfortune put a stop to the whole affair.

The father of *Valerius* was an honest man but exceeding credulous, and was (unknown to his son) drawn into many engagements, for the debts of an extravagant brother, to whose interest the compassionate old man was too much attached: He soon found his error, being surprized with several arrests on his brother's account, for more than his whole estate could answer.

The unhappy youth was quickly informed of his father's distress, and flew to his relief with all the speed that filial piety could give: One of their friends, who was present, told me, there never was a more moving interview

terview: After a long pause of silent sorrow, the old gentleman charged his son not to involve himself in any streights on his account, but leave him to suffer the effects of his own imprudence.

"I know (continued he) the happiness of "your life depends on your marriage with "the gentle *Lemira*, which will be intirely "frustrated by your being concerned in this "affair; nor is your whole fortune suffici-"ent to disengage me from this confine-"ment; but death will soon bring me a full "discharge from a perplexity, into which "my too great credulity, and ill-placed "compassion, has betrayed me: Yet this "and any thing, I can endure with fortitude, "rather than you shall ruin your own fortune "to extricate mine. Pray leave me (said "he;) the concern your looks discover is at "present my heaviest affliction."

The sorrowful youth immediately withdrew, and sending for all the creditors, found that his whole stock, except what was at sea, added to his father's, would hardly do justice to many honest traders demands, who must be ruined, with their families, without satisfaction: But to whatever exi-

gence

gence he reduced himſelf, he reſolved to diſcharge his father, which he ſoon accompliſhed by a handſome compoſition.

Valerius's whole dependance now was on the return of the *Turkey* fleet, where he had conſiderable effects: But my father was ſo angry with him for engaging in his father's affairs, that he forbid me ever ſeeing or thinking any more of him as a lover. Nor did the torrent of his adverſity ſtop here; for within a few days he had intelligence, that two ſhips belonging to him, richly laden, were in their return taken by a *Spaniſh* pirate.

I was ſoon informed of this diſaſter, and writ immediately to *Valerius*, in the ſofteſt language that a paſſion like mine could dictate; and (to conceal nothing from you) I offered to marry him, and put into his poſſeſſion that part of my fortune which was left by my aunt, entirely in my own power. If you ſhould condemn this romantick inſtance of affection in me, you will certainly approve the conduct of my young philoſopher, who, in this criſis of love and adverſity, could act with ſuch compoſure and

true

true greatness of mind, as you will find expressed in the following letter.

"*To* LEMIRA.

"THE distress I am in, too generous "*Lemira*, has not reduced me to such "an abject disposition, as by accepting the "offer you make me of your fortune, to "betray you into a state of necessity and "contempt, on so low a motive as my own "interest: Far be such a selfish view for "ever from my soul! You wrong me, and "your own charms, if you think the passi- "on they have inspired, will suffer me to "act any thing unbecoming it's grandeur. "However my fortunes are sunk, my mind "keeps it' snative elevation, and is untaint- "ed with any selfish or mercenary design. "If I loved you less, I might perhaps (ab- "stracted from your happiness) pursue my "own, and leave you at leisure to repent "your rashness, and curse the mercenary "wretch that was the instrument of your "ruin.

"Your father has forbid your marrying "me, on the forfeiture of his blessing; and "shall I rob you of that, and bring the "weight

" weight of a paternal curse on your head!
" Shall I seduce you from the affluence and
" splendour of fortune, to share in my dis-
" tresses, and struggle with the inconve-
" niences of low life! Could I see you re-
" duced to want and obscurity, in hopes it
" might be a solace to my own misery, and
" lessen my lot of human cares! No, let me
" stand acquitted by heaven and earth of
" such baseness as this.

" Will you call this coldness? will you
" term it indifference, and not rather the ut-
" most effort of affection, the triumph of a
" generous passion? Oh, *Lemira*, you are
" dearer to me than life! next to heaven, I
" love you. In parting with you, I aban-
" don every earthly joy; I quit my whole
" share of human happiness, and must sink
" into the last dejection, if religion did not
" support me with it's divine consolations.

" And here the morning seems to break,
" a gleam of peace salutes me, some pre-
" saging hopes of a prosperous catastrophe
" smile thro' the darkness; nothing is im-
" possible to an almighty Power; there are
" virtues to which heaven has annexed pro-
" mises of a present retribution: It was in
" the

" the practice of the great duties of morali-
" ty, I fell into this extremity; and here the
" divine veracity has engaged itſelf to ſecure
" me; all events are in the hands of the So-
" vereign Diſpoſer; his will makes nature
" and neceſſity; no obſtacle puts a ſtand to
" his deſigns, nor obſtructs the courſe of
" Providence; perpetual beneficence has not
" diminiſhed his ſtores, nor are the ſprings
" of his mercy exhauſted. I muſt own I have
" received ſome conſolation from the verſes
" incloſed, which were written by one of my
" friends in very diſtreſſed circumſtances. I
" muſt bid you an unwilling adieu.

" *Yours*, &c.

" VALERIUS."

On the DIVINE VERACITY.

BE huſh'd, my griefs; 'tis his almighty will,
That rules the ſtorms, and bids you all be ſtill;
Be calm, ye tempeſts, vaniſh ev'ry care,
While with triumphant faith my ſoul draws near
To God in all the confidence of pray'r.

He

He has not bid me seek his face in vain,
Talk to the winds, or to the waves complain;
He hears the callow ravens from their nest,
By him their eager cravings are redress'd;
Young lions thro' the desart roar their wants;
He marks them, and the wild petition grants;
The gaping furrows thirst, nor thirst in vain,
(Parch'd by the noon-day sun) for timely rain;
With silent suits the fair declining flow'rs
Request, and gain, the kind refreshing show'rs.
And will th' Almighty Father turn away,
Nor hear his darling offspring when they pray?
No breach of faithfulness his honour stains,
With day and night his word unchang'd remains;
The various ordinances of the sky
Stand forth his glorious witnesses on high;
Summer and winter, autumn and the spring,
For him by turns their attestations bring;
Unblemish'd his great league with nature stands,
And full reliance on his truth demands:

Nothing that breathes a second deluge fears,
When in the clouds the radiant bow appears.
Can the most High like man at random speak,
Forfeit his honour, and his promise break?
Does he that falsly swears, his vengeance claim?
And shall he stain his own tremendous name?
The earth, the heav'ns were witness when he swore
By his great Self; what would thy fears have more?
And had a greater than himself been found
That greater had the high engagement bound.
Shall fleeting winds th' Almighty's words disperse,
Or breathing dust his solemn oath reverse?
Can he like man, unconstant man, repent?
Shall any chance, or unforeseen event,
Start up, his settled purpose to prevent?
Or can he fail in the expected hour,
A stranger to his own extent of power?
What profit can a worm his Maker bring,
That he should flatter such a worthless thing?

Why

Why ſhould he condeſcend to mind my tears,
Or calm with ſoft deluding words and fears?
Can he (of perfect happineſs poſſeſt)
Deride the woes that human life moleſt,
Or mock the hopes that on his goodneſs reſt?
Nature may change her courſe, confuſion reign,
And men expect the riſing ſun in vain;
But ſhould th' eternal truth and promiſe fail,
Infernal night and horror muſt prevail;
The thrones of light would ſhake, th' angelic pow'rs
Would ſtop their harps amidſt the bliſsful bow'rs.
No more the ſoft, the ſweet melodious ſtrain,
Would gently glide along the happy plain;
No more would tuneful *Hallelujahs* riſe,
And ſhouts triumphant fill the ſounding ſkies:
Each heav'nly countenance a ſullen air
Of grief and anxious diffidence, would wear.
The golden palaces, the ſplendid ſeats,
The flow'ry manſions, and theſe ſoft retreats,
The roſy ſhades, and ſweet delicious ſtreams,
Would diſappear like tranſitory dreams.
Angels themſelves their brighteſt hopes recline
On nothing more unchangeable than mine.

Am

Am I deceiv'd? What can their charter be?
Fair seraphim may be deceiv'd like me:
If goodness and veracity divine
Can fail, their heav'n's an airy dream like mine.

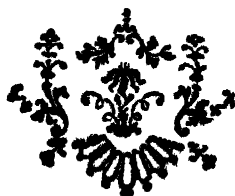
But, oh! I dare the glorious venture make,
And lay my soul and future life at stake;
Be earth, be heaven, at desp'rat, hazard lost,
If here my faith should prove an empty boast!
Whate'er your arts, ye pow'rs of hell, suggest,
The truth of God undaunted I attest:
Produce your annals with insulting rage,
Bring out your records, shew the dreadful page,
One instance where th' Almighty broke his word,
Since first the race of men his name ador'd;
In gloomy characters point out the hour,
Exert your malice, summon all your pow'r;
With rites infernal all your pomp display,
And mark with horror the tremendous day;
Confus'd, you search your dreadful rolls in vain,
Th' eternal honour shines without a stain,

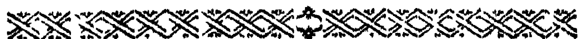
Unblemiſh'd ſhines in men and in angels
view;
*Juſt are thy ways, thou King of ſaints, and
true!*

I incloſed this letter, my dear brother, to ſhew you, with what equality of mind the generous youth behaves himſelf in this diſtreſs. I beg you would haſten your return to *England*, in compaſſion to

Your unhappy Friend and Siſter,

LEMIRA.





LETTER XIV

To HERMINIUS.

I Have juſt reaſon to fear my eſſay on this noble ſubject will not anſwer your expectation; with whatever fluency I could expreſs myſelf, when inſpired by mortal beauty, the pomp of language fails me. Here the boldeſt figures loſe their emphaſis, and grow inſipid on this ſuperior theme.

DIVINE LOVE.

FOR thee, fond Love, my darling theme,
My lute has oft been ſtrung;
Thy pow'r, by ev'ry anſw'ring ſtream,
In gentle notes I ſung;
Laurinda taught my muſe her art;
And fill'd with tender fires my heart;
She taught me how to paint thy beauteous face,
Thy charming form, and ev'ry moving grace.

But who shall guide the darling strain,
Celestial Love! that aims at thee,
Thou fairest off-spring of the Deity?
I call the pow'rs of harmony in vain,
In vain the softest accents I employ;
The brightest metaphors in vain I chuse,
With all the melting language lovers use
To tell their pain, or speak their rising joy.
All the heights of pure desire,
Holy love, and heav'nly fire,
At once my panting breast inspire:
Such ardour smiling martyrs know,
When, defying ev'ry foe,
In triumph on to death they go.
Tell me, Thou, for whom I prove
All the fierce extremes of love,
How thy charms, so far retir'd
From mortal sense, have all my bosom fir'd:
Greatness and fame, beauty and harmony,
Are all but empty names, compar'd with
Thee:
Be thou but mine,
The whole creation I at once resign.
Vanish, thou earth, and ev'ry gawdy scene
Of hill and dale, or grove, or flow'ry field,
When by the spring adorn'd with chearful
green:
Vanish, whate'er delights thou else canst
yield.
Thou

Thou ſun, be dark; and let eternal night
Conceal thy vital ſplendour from my ſight.
Thou moon, and ev'ry gay ethereal fire,
Burn out your golden ſtore;
I ſhall be bleſt, when all your lights expire,
And earth, and ſea, and ſkies ſhall be no more!

Place me where infernal night,
And endleſs horror reign;
Where, baniſh'd far from hope and light,
Unhappy ghoſts complain:
Ev'n there, one gentle ſmile of thine
Th' eternal gloom would chaſe;
Immortal day would on me ſhine,
And pleaſure fill the place.

Should heav'n ſurround me with full tides of joy,
And open all it's glories to my ſight,
One frown of thine would all that heav'n deſtroy,
And wither my delight;
One frown of thine th' immortal groves would blaſt,
And darkneſs o'er the bliſsful regions caſt.

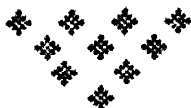
You that ſing in happy bow'rs,
And in unmingled pleaſures paſs the hours,

That know the height of heav'nly bliſs,
Come play me ſome ſoft air of Paradiſe;
Gently ſtrike your ſweeteſt ſtrings,
And touch my ſoul on all it's tender ſprings,
While, riſing on the muſick's downy wings,
I'll bid at once mortality adieu,
And love and paint the ſacred flame like you.

But, my dear *Herminius*, the preſent performance will convince you, that I have not yet learnt the ſtrains of immortality; and perhaps you will not think it neceſſary for me to make an apology for not being an angel: However, if I can contribute to your entertainment as a mere mortal, you may command

Your moſt humble Servant,

EVANDER.





LETTER XV.

To ALONZO.

YOU have ſpent ſo many happy hours at the Earl of ——'s fine ſeat in the country, that 'tis unneceſſary to deſcribe thoſe beautiful ſcenes, with which you are ſo well acquainted: Here I have paſſed a great part of the ſummer ſeaſon, in a manner ſuited to my contemplative humour. Having no taſte for country diverſions, or any kind of rural ſports, my pleaſures were confined to the charming ſhades and gardens, with which the houſe is ſurrounded.

Here I enjoyed an unmoleſted tranquility, 'till a fit of curioſity led me to make an excurſion into the wide campaign, that opened before me from the borders of the park.

If I begin with the roſy dawn, you will pardon my romantick ſtyle, in relating the ſurprizing adventure: But, without telling

a lye, the morning was yet dusky; the balmy dew, and fragrant gales, perfumed the air with their untainted sweets; while, with thoughts free as the airy songsters that warble on the branches, I wandered from rising hills to winding vales, through flow'ry lawns to leafy woods, 'till I found myself under the shade of a venerable row of elms; which put me in mind of Sir *Roger de Coverley*'s rookery; the aged trees shot their heads so high, that, to one who passed under them, the crows and rooks, which rested on their tops, seemed to be cawing in another region. I was delighted with the noise, while, with the *Spectator*, I considered it as a kind of natural prayer to that Being, who supplies the wants of his whole creation; my thoughts were inspired with a pleasing gratitude to the beneficent Father of the universe, 'till the sequel of my devotion was interrupted by the sight of a beautiful girl, about four or five years old, sitting on the grass, with a basket of flowers in her lap, which she was sticking in the snowy fleece of a little lamb, that stood tamely by her.

I began to hope it was one of the fairy race, or some pretty phantom that haunted

the

the grove; for the adjacent houſe belonging to this reverend avenue looked more like a dormitory for the dead, than an habitation for the living; every thing about it appeared ruinous and deſolate; I could neither hear the voice, nor trace the ſteps of mortal men in this abſolute ſolitude; nor had I any hopes of knowing into what wild region I was got, unleſs the pretty figure ſitting on the graſs could give me ſome intelligence.

I made my approaches very reſpectfully: But what was my ſurprize, in drawing near, to find the air, the complexion, every feature in miniature, of the ungrateful *Aurelia*, on whom I once ſo paſſionaeely doated? A thouſand tormenting ideas ruſhed into my mind at the ſight of this lovely creature, who ſmiled on me with the moſt enchanting innocence. While I ſtood eagerly gazing at her, which was not long, *Aurelia* herſelf entered the walk, and confirmed my ſuſpicion, that this child was a living proof of her infamy.

'Tis about ſix years ſince ſhe eloped from the publick view, regardleſs of her own illuſtrious family, or the obligations ſhe was under to the generous *Cleone*, who treated

her with the utmoſt confidence, and was the laſt that ſuſpected her huſband's criminal affair with her:—Be my own wrongs forgot, and all the contempt with which ſhe treated whatever propoſals honour, and a diſintereſted paſſion, could make.

I found her now an object of pity, rather than reſentment; the dejection of her mind was viſible in her pale hagard looks, and the wretched negligence of her habit. I could hardly perſuade myſelf this was the celebrated thing that once appeared in all publick places with ſuch a parade of equipage and vanity.

She was in the utmoſt confuſion at this interview, 'till, excuſing myſelf, I told her, this intruſion was undeſigned, and purely the effect of chance, as I was taking a morning's ramble from the Earl of ——'s, where I had ſpent ſome time; and that ſhe might depend on my word, not to diſcover her abode to any one in that family.

By this time ſhe was a little compoſed, and invited me to reſt myſelf after my walk: I followed her into the houſe, which looked more like the manſions of deſpair, than a retreat for a lady of pleaſure; an awful ſilence

ſilence reigned in every room, thro' which I made a ſhift to find my way by a dim twilight, that glimmered through ſome windows of as antique a figure as thoſe of an old abbey: The furniture, I fancy, has not been diſplaced from times immemorable; it looks more like unwieldy lumber, than any thing deſigned for uſe or ornament: There was nothing of a modern date but a tea-table, and that in ruinous circumſtances.

It was now about ten o'clock: *Aurelia* ordered tea and chocolate to be brought: All her attendance was a freſh-coloured country laſs, who withdrew as ſoon as we had breakfaſted.

I was impatient to hear a relation of *Aurelia*'s misfortunes, but durſt not aſk any queſtion, for fear it would look like inſulting her diſtreſs; only renewed my excuſes for interrupting her privacy.

To which ſhe replied, " That tho' I was " the laſt perſon in the world ſhe ſhould " have choſe to be a witneſs of her infamy, " yet ſhe thought herſelf happy, in having " an opportunity to make ſome apology for " her injuſtice to me, in refuſing thoſe terms " of honour I once offered, and complying " with

" with ſuch reproachful conditions, as had " made her the moſt miſerable creature on " earth.

" It was my criminal inclination (*con-* " *tinued ſhe*) for *Caſſander*, that made me " inflexible to your entreaties, and my fa- " ther's commands to marry you. But what- " ever wrong this was to your merit, my " guilt, with regard to the generous *Cleone*, " is of a higher nature: The intrigue I had " with her huſband was attended with cir- " cumſtances of the blackeſt treachery: I " had broke through the tendereſt engage- " ments of friendſhip, and granted all that " my diſſolute lover could aſk; when finding " myſelf with child, to hide my infamy, he " brought me to this diſmal place, an old " manſion-houſe belonging to his family, " where I am cut off from human ſociety, " except two or three ſtupid peaſants, his " tenants, who reſide in ſome part of this " Gothick ſtructure. 'Tis now ſix years ſince " I have breathed and ſlept (for I cannot " call it living) in this melancholy confine- " ment, without hopes of a releaſe, being " entirely dependent on *Caſſander*'s allowance " and caprice, who but too well knows his

" own power, and my folly; which makes " him, inſtead of the humble lover, act the " imperious tyrant. His viſits are ſeldom, " his ſtay ſhort, and I am left whole months " to languiſh alone in a deteſted ſolitude.

" This child, (*continued ſhe, weeping, and* " *taking the lovely creature in her arms*) this " child, which might have been my joy, " proves my greateſt affliction: Should I " die, ſhe is immediately abandoned to hard- " ſhip and neceſſity; ſhould I live, it diſ- " tracts me to think ſhe may follow my ſcan- " dalous example. How can I give her in- " ſtructions to avoid thoſe vices, which my " practice approves? or recommend that " virtue, whoſe ſacred rules I have ſo openly " violated? And ſtill I love this worthleſs " man: Were I penitent, could I reſolve on " a reformation, this leiſure and retirement " would be a bleſſing, an advantage to me; " but I am obſtinate in guilt, while I de- " ſpair of happineſs in this world, or the " next: 'Till I came hither, my hours were " ſpent in frolick and gaiety; a conſtant " ſeries of diverſions ſhortened the days, " and gave wings to the jovial hours, which " now have leaden feet, and, burdened with

" grief,

" grief, lag heavily along. No ſort of re-
" flection gives me joy; whether I look
" backward or forward, all is darkneſs and
" confuſion; I am no way qualified for re-
" tirement: Books are my averſion, think-
" ing is my horror; I am weary of living,
" and afraid to die!"

I heard this account with a heart full of compaſſion, and ſaid what I could to perſuade her to break off this criminal commerce with *Caſſander*, and throw herſelf on the care of Providence, and the generoſity of her friends: But I had too much value for my own peace, and too great a contempt for a woman of *Aurelia*'s character, to make any particular propoſals for her freedom; and bidding her adieu, haſted back to the Earl's without ſaying one word of my adventure; which I commit to your ſecrecy, and ſubſcribe myſelf

Your moſt humble Servant,

POLYDORE.



LETTER XVI.

ROSAMOND to HENRY II.

READ o'er these lines, the records of my shame,
If thou can'st suffer yet my hateful name;
Clean as this spotless page, 'till stain'd by me,
Such was my conscience, 'till seduc'd by thee:
Chaste were my thoughts, and all serene within,
'Till mark'd by thee with Characters of sin.
Had some successful lover, in the prime,
Of equal years, betray'd me to a crime,
Resistless love had been my best defence,
And gain'd compassion for the soft offence:
But while thy wither'd age had no such charms,
To tempt a blooming virgin to thy arms,
I'm justly thought a prostitute for gold,
A mercenary thing to sordid int'rest sold.

Be curs'd that female fiend, whose practis'd art,
With wanton tales, seduc'd my guiltless heart;
Let her with endless infamy be curs'd;
Of all the agents hell employs, the worst:
Perdition to herself the wretch insur'd,
When she my youthful modesty allur'd:
Oh, fatal day! when to my virtue's wrong,
I fondly listen'd to her flatt'ring tongue!
But, oh! more fatal moment, when she gain'd
That vile consent which all my virtue stain'd!
Yet Heav'n can tell, with what extreme regret
The fury of thy lawless flames I met;
For, unexperienc'd in the ways of sin,
A conscious honour struggled still within.
Oh, could I! but the ill-tim'd wish is vain,
Could I my former innocence regain!
Thy proffer'd kingdom, *Henry*, were a prize,
Which, balanc'd with that wealth, I should despise.
But I no more my sex's pride can boast:
Alas! what has one moment's madness cost!

Not *Woodstock*'s charming bow'rs can ease my grief;
For I must fly myself to find relief:

Oft,

Oft, while the ſun in length'ning ſhades declines,
And thro' the waving trees more mildly ſhines;
Alone thro' all the beauteous walks I rove,
And hope the ſweets of ſolitude to prove:
But, at my ſight, each verdant proſpect wears
A gloomy view, and ev'ry plant appears
To bend it's top, o'ercharg'd with dewy tears;
Methinks each painted bloſſom hangs it's head,
Avoids my touch, and withers where I tread.
If angling near a cryſtal brook I ſtand,
And with deluding ſkill the bait command;
The cautious fiſh that fly the ſnare, upbraid
My heedleſs youth, more eaſily betray'd.
Amidſt the garden wrought by curious hands,
A noble ſtatue of *Diana* ſtands;
Naked ſhe ſtands, with juſt proportions grac'd,
And bathing in a ſilver fountain plac'd:
When near the flow'ry borders I advance,
At me ſhe ſeems to dart an angry glance.
What ſcenes, alas, can pleaſe a guilty mind!
What joy can I in theſe receſſes find,
For lawleſs and forbidden love deſign'd!

In

In ſome obſcure and melancholy cell,
Rather a weeping penitent I'd dwell,
Than here a glorious proſtitute remain,
To all my ſex's modeſty a ſtain.

This ſtately lab'rinth, rais'd with vaſt expence,
Diſplays my ſhame, in it's magnificence:
As through the ſtately rooms I lately walk'd,
And with my woman of it's paintings talk'd,
She 'ſpy'd the draught of *Tarquin*'s wanton flame,
And, heedleſs, aſk'd the injur'd beauty's name:
This, I reply'd, is that illuſtrious Dame—
Renown'd for chaſtity, I ſhould have ſaid;
But here, a riſing bluſh my face o'erſpread;
Confus'd, I ſtopp'd, and left th'inquiring maid.
Lucretia's ſtory on my life had caſt
A black reproach, who yet can live diſgrac'd:
I ſhould, like her, with juſt reſentment preſt
Have plung'd the fatal dagger to my breaſt
What ſpecious colours can diſguiſe my ſin,
Or ſtill the reſtleſs monitor within?
Thy greatneſs, *Henry*, but augments my ſhame,
And adds immortal ſcandal to my name;

My

My odious name, which, as the worst disgrace,
The *Cliffords* cancel from their noble race!
To what propitious refuge shall I run,
The terrors of a guilty mind to shun?
In vain the sun it's morning pride displays;
I turn my eyes, and sicken at it's rays:
The silver moon, and sparkling stars by night,
Torment me too with their officious light:
The glimm'ring tapers round my chamber plac'd,
Across the room fantastick shadows cast;
Of all my dreams the melancholy scene
Presents an injur'd, a revengeful Queen.
Last night, when sleep my heavy eyes had clos'd,
To all her rage, methought, I stood expos'd!
Wild were her looks, a poison'd cup she brought,
And proudly offer'd me the fatal draught;
The destin'd bowl I took with trembling hands,
Compell'd to execute her fierce commands;
This dismal omen aggravates my fears,
Before my fancy still the furious Queen appears.



LETTER XVII.

MARY *Queen of* France, *to* CHARLES BRANDON *Duke of* Suffolk.

The Princess MARY, Henry *the* VIIIth's *younger Sister, being in love with the Duke of* Suffolk, *was, for publick Reasons, married to* LEWIS XII. *of* France, *who died in six Months after. The Queen being again at Liberty, writes the following Epistle to the Duke of* Suffolk, *her first Lover.*

An Imitation of DRAYTON's Epistle.

LET these soft lines my kindest thoughts convey,
And tell thee what I suffer by thy stay.
Did seas divide us, this might well excuse
Thy negligence, and my fond heart abuse;
But *Calais* from the *Kentish* strand is seen,
A gentle current only rolls between.
Nor needs my *Suffolk*, like *Leander*, brave
A threat'ning death in ev'ry breaking wave,
When,

When, guided only by a glimm'ring light,
He cross'd the stormy *Hellespont* each night:
Tall ships with flying sails, and lab'ring oars,
Attend to land thee on the *Gallick* shores.
But thou art chang'd! that ardour is expir'd,
Which once thy wishes with impatience fir'd,
When *Savoy*'s blooming duchess strove in vain
From me the conquest of thy heart to gain:
Invited by great *Henry*'s martial fame,
The haughty Princess, with her brother, came
To compliment the King for *Tournay* gain'd;
Where, in a rich pavilion, entertain'd,
Thy noble form th' unguarded fair surpriz'd;
Nor were her tender wishes long disguis'd:
Whatever flatt'ry, love, or wanton art
Could do, she practis'd to seduce thy heart.
Great *Antony*, by such allurements gain'd,
For *Cleopatra*, all his glory stain'd:
But thy firm faith no injury receiv'd,
For you were just, or I was well deceiv'd.
Nor were my virgin vows less true to thee,
When young *Castile* address'd the Court for me;
The charms of proffer'd empire I resign'd,
And all that could ambition move, declin'd;
A softer passion had possess'd my mind:

And

And while unrival'd in thy breaſt I reign'd,
My thoughts the luſtre of a crown diſdain'd.
But, ah! what changes human joys attend!
On airy chance our brighteſt hopes depend:
Victorious *Henry*'s arms ſtill meet ſucceſs;
The vanquiſh'd *Gauls* at laſt propoſe a peace:
By *Wolſey*'s policy their terms ſucceed,
And both the hoſtile nations are agreed,
While I the publick victim am decreed.
Condemn'd to ſhare the *Chriſtian Monarch*'s bed,
And curs'd with that magnificence I fled.
I know my rank no private choice allow'd,
And what a Princeſs to her country ow'd.
Theſe ſplendid maxims ſhould have ſway'd my breaſt,
But love intirely had my ſoul poſſeſt.
How oft I wiſh'd my humble lot had been
Beneath the glorious hazard of a Queen!
That crown'd by rural maids with painted flow'rs,
I rang'd the fields, and ſlept in verdant bow'rs!
Belov'd of ſome young ſwain with *Brandon*'s face,
His voice, his geſture, and his blooming grace!

In

In all but birth and ſtate reſembling thee!
Then unmoleſted had we liv'd, and free
From thoſe unhappy turns which greatneſs
brings;
While rocks and meadows, ſhades and purling ſprings,
The flow'ry valley, and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no ſuperior name to love.
Such ſcenes of this inglorious life I drew,
And half believ'd the charming fiction true,
'Till real ills diſſolv'd the pleaſing dreams;
The groves and valleys fled, the lawns and
ſilver ſtreams,
The gay fantaſtick paradiſe I mourn'd,
While courts and factions, crowns and cares
return'd.
With ſighs I ſtill recall the fatal day,
When no pretence could gain a longer ſtay.
The lovely Queen my parting ſorrow ſaw,
Nor *Henry*'s preſence kept my grief in awe:
No rules of decent cuſtom could controul,
Or hide the wild diſorder of my ſoul;
When ſhipp'd for *France* before the dancing
wind
The navy fled, and left my hopes behind.
With weeping eyes I ſtill ſurvey'd the ſtrand,
Where on a riſing cliff I ſaw thee ſtand;
Nor

Nor once from thence my ſtedfaſt ſight withdrew,
'Till the lov'd object was no more in view.
Farewell, I cry'd, dear charming youth; with thee
Each chearful proſpect vaniſhes from me.

Loud ſhouts and triumphs on the *Gallick* coaſt
Salute me, but the noiſy zeal was loſt;
Nor ſhouts nor triumphs forc'd my leaſt regard,
Thy parting ſighs, methought, was all I heard,
But now at *Abbeville* by *Lewis* met,
I ſtrove the thoughts of *Suffolk* to forget:
For here my faith was to a monarch vow'd,
And ſolemn rites my paſſion diſallow'd:
However pure my former flames had been,
Unblemiſh'd honour made them now a ſin.
But ſcarce my virtue had the conqueſt gain'd,
And every wild forbidden wiſh reſtrain'd,
When at *St. Dennis*, with imperial ſtate
Inveſted, on the *Gallick* throne I ſat;
The day with noble tournaments was grac'd,
Your name among the *Britiſh* champions plac'd.

Invited

Invited by a guilty thirſt of fame,
Without regard for my repoſe you came.
The liſts I ſaw thee ent'ring with ſurprize;
And felt the dazzling glances of thine eyes.

Ye ſacred pow'rs, (I cry'd) that rule above!
Defend my breaſt from this perfidious love.
Ye holy lamps! before whoſe awful lights
I gave my hand; and ye religious rites!
Aſſiſt me too; nor let a thought unchaſte,
Or guilty wiſh, my plighted honour blaſt:
While paſſion ſtruggling with my pious fears,
Forc'd from my eyes involuntary tears.
Some tender bloſſom thus, with leaves enlarg'd,
Declines it's head, with midnight dew o'er-charg'd:
The paſſing breezes ſhake the gentle flow'r,
And ſcatter all around a pearly ſhow'r.
From this diſtracting hour I ſhunn'd thy ſight,
And gain'd the conqueſt by a prudent flight:
But human turns and ſov'reign deſtiny
Have ſet me now from theſe engagements free.
The ſtars, propitious to my virgin love,
My firſt deſires and early vows approve,
While buſy politicians urge in vain,
That publick reaſons ſhould my choice reſtrain;

That none but *York*'s or *Lancaster*'s high race,
Or great *Plantagenet*'s, I ought to grace:
Nor *Suffolk* wants a long illustrious line,
And worth, that shall in future records shine.
They own'd thy valour, when thy conqu'ring lance
Carry'd the prize from all the youth of *France*.
Thy merit *Henry*'s constant favour shows,
And envy only can my choice oppose.
Thy noble presence, wit, and fine address,
The *British* and the *Gallick* court confess.
Alençon's shape, and *Vendôme*'s sparkling eye,
Count *Paul*'s gay mien, and *Bourbon*'s majesty,
No longer are admir'd when thou art by.
There nothing wants to justify my flame,
The statesmen grant but a poor empty name.
And what's the gaudy title of a King?
What sort of bliss can royal grandeur bring?
When thou art absent, what's the court to me,
But tiresome state, and dull formality?
This toy, a crown, I would resign, to prove
The peaceful joys of innocence and love.



LETTER XVIII.

PENELOPE to ULYSSES.

From OVID.

DIſtracted with his ſtay, yet ſtill the ſame,
True to her antient vows, and early flame,
Penelope ſalutes her abſent King:
Oh! would himſelf at laſt an anſwer bring!
Proud *Troy* is fall'n, or *Grecian* virgins hate:
Yet not th' unrivall'd riches of her ſtate,
Nor all the glories of her monarch's throne,
Can, for the pains thy abſence gives, atone.
Oh! had the waves, that gently wafted o'er
The luſtful *Phrygian* to the *Spartan* ſhore,
Plung'd in the deep the guilty load they bore!
Abandon'd then I ſhould not waſte away,
In unavailing moans, the lazy day;
Or loſt to joy, and widow'd of delight,
Curſe the dull lagging hours of the more tedious night.

Fruitful of doubts, my love ſtill fear'd for you
Dangers unknown, and greater than the true,
I thought all *Troy* conſpir'd againſt thy head,
And *Hector*'s name, but mention'd, ſtruck me dead.
Trembling I heard of falſe *Achilles* ſlain,
And wept to find the bold deceit was vain.
Tlepolemus fell by the *Lycian* ſpear,
Tlepolemus renew'd my anxious care.
In ſhort, at ev'ry *Grecian* hero's fall,
Thro' the long war before the fatal wall,
A thrilling coldneſs ran thro' every part,
Chill'd up my blood, and ſhudder'd at my heart.
But my chaſte paſſion mov'd the pitying ſkies;
My Lord is ſafe, and *Troy* in aſhes lies.
With proſp'rous gales the *Argive* chiefs return,
And to their country Gods *Barbarick* incenſe burn.
The wives in pious gifts declare their joy,
While their ſav'd huſbands tell the fate of *Troy*:
Old men and frighted virgins, fix'd around,
In dumb amazement dwell upon the ſound:

The

The ſoldiers in gay feaſts their cares compoſe,
And mark in wine the ſcenes of antient woes:
This is *Sigæum*, here ſwift *Simois* flow'd,
There high erect old *Priam*'s palace ſtood;
Here fierce *Pelides* urg'd the dreadful war,
There fix'd the bleeding *Hector* to his car:
There mov'd *Ulyſſes*, certain of ſucceſs,
Greater his conduct, nor his courage leſs:
'Twas *Neſtor* told us all: He told us too
The arts that *Dolon* and the *Thracian* flew.
Heedleſs and too forgetful as you were,
In you I'm ſure 'twas criminal to dare:
When you but for one faithful friend alone
Dealt fate to ſquadrons, and provok'd your own,
How well your wife and infant left behind,
How well your tender paſſion fill'd your mind!
I fainted as I heard the dreadful tale;
Scarce your ſucceſs could o'er my fears prevail.
But what's ſucceſs, what's ruin'd *Troy* to me,
Or all the ſavage joys of victory?
If ſtill unbleſt, I ſink beneath my pain,
And never muſt enjoy my Lord again!
For other wives deſtroy'd, to me ſtill ſtands
The wall erected by immortal hands.

Now plenteous harveſts grow where *Ilium* ſtood,
The ſoil well fatten'd with the natives blood.
O'er ruin'd palaces that reach'd the ſkies,
Low ſpires of graſs, and humble ſhrubs, ariſe.
Still of the conqu'ror's abſence I complain,
Nor know what diſtant worlds my wand'ring Lord detain.
Ulyſſes I of ev'ry ſhip require,
The ſailors with repeated queſtions tire:
Hopeleſs and half-deſpairing, yet I write;
The cruel pow'rs, that envy my delight,
May bring at leaſt my letters to your ſight.
To *Pylos* antient *Neſtor*'s fruitful reign,
And *Sparta*'s injur'd court, I ſent in vain;
For nor from *Sparta*, nor from *Pylos* came,
Aught ſave wild rumours, and uncertain fame.
Again I wiſh *Troy*'s lofty tow'rs might riſe,
And curſe the thoughtleſs vows that gain'd the ſkies.
War's hazards then would be my only care,
And I in common with a thouſand fear:
Now all the dangers of the land and ſeas
Are preſent to my thoughts, and baniſh eaſe:
While you, alas! perhaps with pleaſure rove,
And faithleſs nouriſh a forbidden love;

Take

Take some deluding harlot to your breast,
And in her arms with lawless transports blest,
Make my dull easy constancy your jest.
Ye pow'rs! avert the thought I cannot bear,
And give my vain suspicions to the air.
Whate'er may be the reasons of thy stay,
Oh! may'st thou never willingly delay!
Me to a second choice my sire invites,
Chides my delays, and urges all his rights.
Still let him urge, my love my faith assures;
I am, I must, I will be ever yours.
Yet my warm pray'rs the good old monarch move,
He views my tears, and mourns my hapless love,
But a vile train of thoughtless youths proclaim
With lawless impudence a saucy flame.
Hither from *Zante* and *Samos* they resort,
And revel unmolested in thy court.
Treasures, the purchase of thy blood, they seize,
Those spoils *Eurymachus*, *Pisander* these:
Antinous here with equal rage possest,
There greedy *Polybus*, a constant guest,
Plunder around—And need I name the rest,
Who in your absence on our vitals prey,
And waste in costly luxury the day?

The beggar *Irus*, a detested name,
And base *Melanthus* last, complete thy shame,
'Gainst these insults what force can I employ?
What thy old father, or thy tender boy?
For his dear life a thousand snares are laid,
And certain ruin aim'd at his unguarded head.
Preserve him, Heav'n! and if we ne'er must
join,
Yet may he live to close your eyes and mine.
In vain *Laertes* does his pow'r oppose,
Unfit for war, against surrounding foes.
Telemachus will soon to fame aspire,
Now his soft years a parent's aid require.
Oh! thou, our only hope and refuge, come,
Dispel our dangers, and avert our doom:
Form the young hero in the arts of war,
To rival thee, but with more caution dare.
Haste, and relieve your sire with years op-
prest:
Once more he longs to clasp you to his breast,
Then shake off tedious life, and sink to rest.
Oh! haste to me!—A little longer stay
Will ev'ry grace, each fancy'd charm decay:
Increasing cares, and time's resistless rage,
Will waste my bloom, and wither it to age;
Yet at thy sight wild joys, and sprightly love,
Shall dying youth recall, and ev'ry charm
improve.



SIX LETTERS FROM LAURA to AURELIA.

LETTER I.

From LAURA, *giving an Account of her Brother's criminal Amour, and her own Passion for the handsome Hermit.*

COULD your importunity have prevailed with my brother to have left me in *London*, you had been free from the vexation that I shall certainly give you, by making you the confident of all my country adventures; and I hope you will relieve my chagrin, by telling

ing me what the dear, bewitching, bufy world is doing, while I am idly fauntering away my time in rural fhades. How happy are you, my dear *Aurelia*! How I envy you the enjoyment of duft, of crowds and noife, with all the polite hurry of the *Beau-Monde*!

My brother brought me hither to fee a country-feat he has lately purchafed: He would fain perfuade me it is finely fituated; but I fhould think it more finely fituated in the *Mall*, or even in *Cheapfide*, than here. Indeed, I hardly know where we are, only that it is at a dreadful diftance from the theatre-royal in Drury-Lane, from the opera, from the mafquerade, and every thing in this world that is worth living for.

I can fcarce tell you whither to direct your letters; we are certainly at the ends of the earth, on the borders of the continent, the limits of the habitable globe, under the polar ftar, among wild people and favages. I thought we fhould never have come to the end of our pilgrimage; nor could I forbear afking my brother, if we were to travel by dry land to the *Antipodes*; not a mile but feemed ten, that carried me from *London*, the centre of all my joys.

The

The Country is my averſion; I hate trees and hedges, ſteep hills, and ſilent valleys: The ſatyriſt may laugh, but to me,

"*Green fields, and ſhady groves, and cryſtal*
"*ſprings,*
"*And larks, and nightingales, are odious*
"*things.*"

I had rather hear *London* cries, with the rattle of coaches, than ſit liſtening to the melancholy murmur of purling brooks, or all the wild muſick of the woods; the ſmell of violets gives me the hyſtericks; freſh air murders me; my conſtitution is not robuſt enough to bear it; the cooling zephyrs will fan me into a catarrh, if I ſtay here much longer.

If theſe are the ſeats of the Muſes, let them unenvied enjoy their glittering whimſies, and converſe with the viſionary beings of their own forming. I have no fancy for Dryades and Fairies, nor the leaſt prejudice to human ſociety; a mere earthly beau, with an embroidered coat, ſuits my taſte better than an aëreal lover with his ſhining treſſes, and rainbow wings.

The sober twilight, which has employed so many soft descriptions, is with me a very dull period; nor does the moon, (on which the poets doat) with all her starry train, delight me half so much as an assembly-room, illuminated with wax-candles: This is what I should prefer to the glaring sun in his meridian splendour: Day-light makes me sick; it has something in it so common and vulgar, that it seems fitter for peasants to make hay in, or country lasses to spin by, than for the use of people of distinction.

You pity me, I know, dear *Aurelia*, in this deplorable state; the whole creation is a blank to me, it is all joyless and desolate: In whatever gay images the Muses have dressed these rustick abodes, I have not penetration enough to discover them: Not the flowery field, nor spangled sky, the rosy morn, or balmy evening, can recreate my thoughts: I am neither a religious nor poetical enthusiast, and without either of these qualifications, what should I do in silent retreats, and pensive shades?

I find myself little at ease in this absence of the noisy diversions of the town; it is hard for me to keep up my spirits in lei-

sure

ſure and retirement; it makes me anxiouſly inquiſitive, what will become of me when my breath flies away: Death, that ghaſtly phantom, perpetually intrudes on my ſolitude, and in ſome doleful knell, from a neighbouring ſteeple, often calls upon me to ruminate on coffins and funerals, graves, and gloomy ſepulchres: Theſe diſmal ſubjects put me in the vapours, and make me ſtart at my own ſhadow; nor have I acquired any great degree of fortitude by turning free-thinker, and unlearning

"*All that the nurſe and all the prieſt have*
"*taught.*" Mr. POPE.

You have been too often of our party, not to know my brother is a very infidel: He has a ſort of vanity in making me a proſelyte, and freeing my mind from thoſe prejudices (as he calls them) and ſuperſtitious notions, which govern a great part of the world; but as he finds me a little unwilling to reſign my immortality, he has furniſhed me with a ſyſtem of tranſmigration, and the eternal wandring of the ſoul from one ſpecies of being to another.

However, I do not find myſelf a gainer by renouncing my creed, which allowed me

to

to hope, that after the period of this mortal life, I might be an angel, or at leaſt equal to thoſe bright eſſences.

But by this fantaſtick ſcheme, to which my brother is making me a convert, my pretenſions are ſunk; the utmoſt I can expect, when I have ſhifted my preſent exiſtence, is to grin in a monkey, or look demure in a broad-fac'd owl, or to ſit a chattering magpye in a buſh; it is a chance among which of the animal race I am to be numbered, whether I ſhall mount the air with the winged inhabitants, or crawl on the earth among my brother reptiles, or graze in the meadows with the horned tribe. Indeed, I have no great ſtomach to graſs or hay, and as little inclination to ſleep in a den, or ſtretch my hairy bulk on the dewy plain: But it is yet uncertain, whether I am to ſtalk, or fly, or ſwim; I am ſtill at a loſs, which of theſe various clans to greet as my next kindred.

However, I am better pleaſed with being what I am, than any thing elſe; I had rather be a celebrated toaſt, fluttering at a ball among beaus and pretty fellows, than the moſt gaudy butterfly hovering with painted wings over a bed of tulips: If this ſhould be

be my enſuing fate, it will be a mortifying deſcent from a goddeſs to an inſect.

And really there is ſomething ſo gloomy and uncomfortable in theſe proſpects of futurity, that if I conſider them much longer, I ſhall turn Chriſtian again, in defiance of my brother, and a learned unbeliever his companion, who are perpetually ridiculing my concern about a viſionary hereafter, as they term it.

Indeed, this would be the leaſt of my cares, were I not extremely at leiſure; but as I am, it is impoſſible for me to avoid being ſolicitous what fate attends me, when I reſign this tranſitory life: For I muſt certainly die; I am mortal beyond contradiction; this truth ſits heavy on my ſoul; there is no flying it's evidence, nor does this place afford any amuſement to divert the gloomy reflection. If I ſhould turn devotee, you would think it a more wonderful metamorphoſis than any I have named: But in all changes I am conſtantly

Yours, &c.

LAURA.

P. S. I have a ſecret to tell you concerning my brother, which you ſhall know in my next letter; for I am as impatient to diſcover it, as you can be to hear it.



LETTER II.

To AURELIA.

I HAVE too much confidence in my dear *Aurelia*, to conceal any thing from her; nor can it be any injury to my brother to trust you with his character, and know him to be as great a libertine in his practice as his principles.

But in whatever freedoms he has indulged himself, I must own he has always endeavoured to give me a just sense of honour, and the decorum due to my sex; while he has taken pains to free me from the restraints of religion, he has left nothing unsaid on other motives, that might raise in me the tenderest concern for a clear reputation: Which made me the more resent his scandalous conduct, when I found he had a mistress in his house, whom he had sent hither two or three days before we came: I knew not what to do, nor how to behave myself in this exigence, 'till I found she was rather an

object

object of compaſſion than reproach, and that ſhe came hither, not to indulge an infamous amour, but to ſhelter herſelf from want, and the reſentment of her relations.

She told me the ſtory of her misfortune, as well as the diſtreſs and confuſion ſhe was in would permit; and aſking me a thouſand pardons, ingenuouſly owned ſhe had engaged my brother to bring me with him, or not to follow her.

I found her education had been ſtrictly modeſt, and that ſhe was unacquainted with the vicious part of the world. She is hardly ſixteen, her name *Charlotte*, the only child of a noted citizen, who was utterly ruined in his affairs by a crafty *Jew*; from the height of credit, the unhappy man found himſelf ſunk into circumſtances of diſgrace and indigence.

This was a melancholy turn to *Charlotte*, juſt in the vanity of youthful expectations to find herſelf, from the affluence of fortune, ſo ſuddenly reduced to poverty and contempt. My brother (whom ſhe had ſometimes ſeen with her father, but knew nothing of his character) took this unfortunate criſis to tempt her with rich preſents,

and

and fair promiſes, to leave her friends to retire to ſome private lodgings he had got for her.

In this diſtraction of affairs, her father being under an arreſt, and all his effects ſeized, ſhe was ſurprized into a compliance with my brother's propoſal, nor did he give her time to reflect, or conſult any of her relations, who ſoon got intelligence of this diſhonour, and ſent her a ſevere injunction to ſee their faces no more.

This cruel meſſage, with the ſad tidings of her mother's death, that followed, and the full evidence that ſhe was deluded by my brother with feigned promiſes of marriage, had almoſt proved fatal to her life; nor could any argument allay her ſorrow, 'till her diſtreſſed lover engaged never to aſk any future favour of her, but what the niceſt virtue may grant: On this condition, ſhe conſented to go to his new ſeat in the country; for indeed ſhe has no other refuge. He has kept his promiſe; ſhe lodges in my apartment, and is treated by him with as much decency as if ſhe was his ſiſter.

I never thought ſuch a libertine would turn Platonick; it is an unuſual refinement, and,

and, I believe, the firſt gallantry of this kind he ever practiſed: But as he has an eſteem, a tenderneſs for her; of which, by his diſſolute manners, I always fancied him incapable.

Her behaviour is really modeſt; nor was there ever a more natural impreſſion of truth and innocence, than appears in her face: Her too credulous temper, and unexperienced years, have betrayed her into this ſtate of ſhame and miſery; of which (though too late) ſhe ſeems exquiſitely ſenſible. Since I began this letter, ſhe came into my cloſet, and, with a flood of tears, begged me to contrive ſome way to free her from this dangerous place.

"But whither (ſhe ſaid) can I fly? My "friends will never receive me; nor have I "the confidence to meet their reproaches: "My crime has ſent a tender mother weep-"ing to her grave; it loads my father's "hoary head with a heavier weight of ſor-"row than all his other misfortunes. Love "was not my excuſe, I am yet a ſtranger to "that paſſion; it was a cowardice, it was "fear of poverty, a criminal diſtruſt of ce-"leſtial Providence: I ſhould have begged, "I ſhould have ſtarved, rather than have

"parted

" parted with my innocence on ſuch mer-" cenary terms. However ſincere my re-" pentance is, it can ſignify nothing, with " regard to the world; the ſcandal will ne-" ver be obliterated; I muſt either face the " publick contempt, or waſte my days in a " joyleſs obſcurity. Put my condition in the " beſt light: Would this falſe man, as he " promiſed, marry me, what opprobrious lan-" guage, what terms of infamy, muſt I ex-" pect, in his intervals of chagrin! Beſides " this, the impiety of his converſation terri-" fies me, while I hear him make a jeſt of " thoſe ſacred ſubjects, for which I have " been taught the higheſt veneration. I " ſhould live happier with a wild *Ameri-" can.*"

I made her no reply; the reaſoning was too juſt to admit a contradiction; but this melancholy inſtance makes me more than ever reſolved not to ſurrender, nor even capitulate on any other terms, but thoſe of a lawful *Engliſh* wife. Adieu.

LAURA.



LETTER III.

To AURLLIA.

WHAT mutable things we are! You will be furprized to hear I am grown fond of the country, and have acquired a relifh for it's harmlefs delights: I can talk to an echo, or liften with great attention to a purling ftream: I am in a fair way to make garlands, invoke the Mufes, and write paftorals. Since you heard laft from me, I have met with an agreeable adventure that has given a fort of romantick turn to my imagination.

As I was taking my conftant diverfion of riding on the downs, the evening being exceeding pleafant, I wander'd fome miles beyond my ufual limits, 'till I came in fight of a venerable pile of building, which could be diftinguifhed from a church, by nothing but the want of a fteeple; every thing about it had an air of grandeur and antiquity. At fome diftance from the houfe there was a thick

a thick wood, with ſeveral fine walks cut through it.

I had a great inclination to ramble in thoſe agreeable ſhades; and alighting, ordered my footman to wait at the place where I left him. It was not long before I came to the centre of the foreſt, in which was a large graſs-plat of a circular figure, with a double row of high elms growing in the ſame form round it: In the middle of the green was a little mount, that, by eaſy ſteps of turf, had a winding aſcent to the top, where ſtood an arbour of jeſſamine, woodbine, and roſes, twiſted together with a ſort of elegant diſorder; the gaudy bloſſoms pleaſed the ſight, while their mingled ſweets perfumed the ambient air. On the lower branches of the circling elms hung ſeveral gilt cages, with a variety of ſinging birds in them, which were now chanting their evening ſongs, while a muſical flagelet, in clear and ſhrill reſponſes, anſwered from the delicious arbour.

I began to think there were indeed ſuch things as enchanted foreſts, and vocal groves, or that the great Spirit of nature was ſolacing itſelf in thoſe innocent abodes; however, fe-

male curiosity led me on, 'till I came to the charming bower, where I found a well-dressed beautiful youth, of about seventeen, sitting with a flagelet in his hand: His complexion was a lively brunette, that disgraced the lily and the roses; his dark hair fell in large and graceful curls below his neck; nothing could be more elegant than his shape and features; nor was there any meeting the splendour of his eyes, without being sensible of every darting glance.

I made some apology for my intrusion, which he answered with an easy natural civility; nor could I perceive that my presence gave him the least surprize or confusion: He received me with perfect composure, nor seemed to have any manner of curiosity to know whence I came, or whither I was going; nor (to my great mortification) did he so much as ask whether I was a mortal or a goddess.

It gave me some uneasiness, I confess, to find myself no more an object of surprize, to one who, perhaps, had never seen any thing so fine in this life, for I was in a very rich habit, blazing with scarlet and gold. You cannot imagine how it humbled my vanity,

vanity, to obſerve with what indolence and tranquillity the young inſenſible looked at me; and the more, becauſe he did not ſeem to want wit or politeneſs. I was extremely vexed that at three-and-twenty he ſhould treat me with as much indifference and reſpect, as if I had been his great-grandmother.

This ſedateneſs gave me a curioſity to pry into his ſtudies; for I ſaw two books lie near the place where he ſat: When I opened them, I found one was, *A Diſcourſe of the Government of the Paſſions*; the other, *A Treatiſe of the Immortality of the Soul.* I had nothing to ſay on thoſe grave ſubjects, but, after ſome formal diſcourſe of the fine ſituation of the place, I took my leave of it; the young philoſopher attending me to the limits of the wood, where I left my ſervant; and there we parted, without any ſeeming reluctance on either ſide.

But I own I had a reſtleſs curioſity to know the hiſtory of this lovely youth, and to whom the houſe belonged; nor was it long before I received ſatisfaction from a clergyman, that was riding the ſame road with me: He ſaid, "The manſion was Sir *Harry Lizzard*'s, a "man of merit, and well acquainted with "the

"the world, at which he was now unrea-
"sonably disgusted, and grown solitary, on
"the account of the death of his eldest
"son, to whom he had given a very liberal
"education, and with a generous allowance
"sent him into *Italy*, where his time was
"spent in the most dissolute manner; 'till
"being unhappily engaged with a lewd
"woman, in a fit of jealousy he shot him-
"self through the head. This tragical
"event made Sir *Harry* resolve to give his
"younger son a quite different education:
"Indeed his character is entirely the reverse
"of his elder brother's; he is remarkable
"for his early piety, and great proficiency
"in all sorts of learning, having a very po-
"lite and ingenious person for his tutor:
"But *Philocles*, that is the younger gentle-
"man's name, has too great an allay of gra-
"vity for his early years, and is of so re-
"tired a temper, that he is known by the
"title of *The handsome Hermit*, as he is indeed
"very handsome."

Here the clergyman left me, overjoyed with this intelligence. As soon as I got home, I related my adventure to *Charlotte*, who gave me but little attention; being,

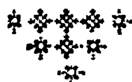
 as

as I told you, in the utmost anxiety, at the manner of life to which she was confined. I am,

Dear AURELIA,

Most sincerely yours, &c.

LAURA.





LETTER IV.

To AURELIA.

SINCE you received my laſt Letter, I have taken another ramble in Sir *Harry Lizzard*'s foreſt: My brother knows nothing of this adventure; and the firſt afternoon that I found him engaged, I perſuaded *Charlotte* to go with me; who was glad of any pretence to fly from her own gallant, tho' ſhe expreſſed but little curioſity to ſee mine.

At the entrance of the grove we left the ſervants to wait with our horſes 'till we returned. In my firſt viſit, I perceived, by *Philocles*'s diſcourſe, that, when the evening was fair, he conſtantly ſpent it in the charming bower, where we now found him reading Dr. YOUNG's *True Eſtimate of Human Life*, with ſuch attention, he did not immediately ſee us, and ſeemed ſurprized at the encounter.

It diverted me, to find his philosophy discomposed; I began to flatter myself, it was the effect of my charms: The hopes of such a conquest delighted me more than all my past victories; it gave a sudden vivacity to my thoughts, and resolving, by my wit, to secure the conquest of my eyes, I began, with great gaiety, to rally him on his recluse manner of life, and losing his gayest hours in a joyless solitude.

By this time the young Stoick had assumed his natural superiority; and instead of replying, as I expected, in a gallant and modish strain, he talked to me of the satisfactions of virtue, the tranquillity of the mind in the rectitude of it's passions; themes which, from another person, would have composed me better than a dose of *Laudanum*: But here,

" ——————*The grave rebuke,*
" *Severe in youthful beauty, added grace*
" *Invincible*——"

Like the fallen angel in *Milton*,

" ——————*Abash'd I stood,*
" *And felt how awful goodness is, and saw*
" *Virtue how lovely in her native shape!*"

The

The glory that darted from his eyes, the agreeable accent, the moving eloquence that flowed from those rosy lips, commanded my whole attention; had he preached a sermon, I could patiently have listened to the blooming orator,

> " ——————*From morn to noon*,
> " *From noon to dewy eve, a summer's day.*"
>
> MILTON.

And yet I could not forbear, sometimes, laughing at his gravity, and begging he would put himself into holy orders: But he was not to be rallied out of his sobriety; nor could I possibly draw from him that flattery, with which, 'till now, I had been addressed; he seemed rather to have an inclination to humble my vanity.

Charlotte, the whole time, sat in a pensive silence, while the tears, which she strove to conceal, would sometimes drop from her eyes. *Philocles*, in every pause of conversation, surveyed her with looks that expressed great humanity: But I was in no disposition to be jealous of any thing I looked on so inferior to myself.

However, my concern to conceal this affair from my brother, made me break off the converſation a little abruptly, that we might be at home at the uſual hour. As ſoon as ever we were got alone, I aſked *Charlotte* how ſhe liked *The handſome Hermit*. "Oh, *(ſaid ſhe, with a tender emotion)* that "I had never ſeen him! 'Till now I was not "ſenſible of the injury this Barbarian your "brother has done me; he has cut me off "from all the lawful joys of life, from the "pleaſure of a reciprocal affection for a man "of worth and virtue: With my innocence "I loſt a right to that happineſs. What! "am I a proſtitute! a kept miſtreſs! Your "brother's—! O infamy! Your brother's "wh—e!"

"If you had not been that, *(ſaid I) Charlotte*, you had been a beggar."

"O envied title! *(ſhe replied)* O glorious "poverty! thou haſt been the choice of "ſaints and hereos; virtue has made thee her "ſanctuary, her peaceful retreat. I could "have fed on wholeſome vegetables, quench-"ed my thirſt at ſome cryſtal brook, indul-"ged my harmleſs ſlumbers on the verdant "turf, undiſturbed with guilty fears. Par-

"don

"-don me (*said she, recollecting herself*) these "passionate sallies; I find myself more than "ever undone, condemned to waste my "hours in sullen obscurity; in the pride of "life, the bloom of soft desires, to languish "in solitary despair! My conscience will not "suffer me to gratify an unlawful passion; "nor should any advantage (were my guilt "a secret) persuade me to impose on a man "of worth. I have been true even to this "rake that has undone me, and frustrated "all my hopes of a lawful happiness."

"That is, my brother has spoiled your "marriage (*said I:*) But, dear *Charlotte*, "why should that thought afflict you, who "intend to pass your future time in pe-"nitence and retirement? Has *The hand-"some Hermit* altered your pious resoluti-"ons?"

"No, (*she replied*) he has rather con-"firmed them: Never had the cause of "virtue a more resistless advocate; methinks "I see the beauty that lightened in his face; "I hear the charming accent still; I felt "the energy of his arguments; my soul "gave it's full assent to the celestial dictates: "I wondered you could so often interrupt "the graceful orator with your ill-timed

"raillery; I could have listened to his lecture of morality, 'till the midnight dews had fallen, 'till all the stars had set."

"Dear *Charlotte* (*said I*) forgive this interruption; I find you are in love: My intention is intirely frustrated of having your picture drawn as the Fair Penitent, with a lamp and prayer-book before you: I perceive you design yet to converse among sinful mortals. Will you go with me to-morrow, to hear another lecture from the charming divine?

"Rather (*she replied*) let me retire to the silent grave, to conceal my infamy: I would not deceive him with an air of innocence, while I am conscious of my own dishonour. I know myself; this is the crisis of my misery; nothing can obliterate this secret sense of shame; I may retire from the publick view, as it is my full resolution: But what is a resolution at sixteen? Without peculiar assistance from Heaven, I shall never conquer the dictates of love and nature; in this perplexity, I must either marry some worthless wretch that knows my infamy, or deceive some man of merit, to whom it is a secret."

Here

Here ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, intreating me to write to an uncle ſhe had, to receive her into his favour, and let her live privately in his family. This I promiſed; nor deſpair of prevailing. My concern for her makes me forget it is time to ſubſcribe myſelf

Your humble Servant,

LAURA.





LETTER V.

To the same.

CHARLOTTE, to her great satisfaction, has this morning left us, and is gone to her uncle, who was easily persuaded to receive her, after he was assured of the sincerity of her penitence: But I found it a harder task to prevail with my brother to resign the idol of his affections; though he lost nothing by her absence, but the pleasure of gazing on her.

I am in pain 'till you know the sequel of my adventure with *Philocles*, who, since I writ last, has several times, by appointment, met me in the delicious bower; but still, to my great vexation, he appeared insensible of any tender impression: I could discern nothing in his conversation, but a pious design to convert me to Christianity, and convince me of the folly of the new scheme, to which my brother had made me a proselyte.

But

But the laſt time we met, I obſerved a ſoft confuſion in his looks, 'till after a long pauſe, (which I had no mind to interrupt) " I am going (*ſaid he*) to ſet myſelf in a " very ridiculous light to one of your cha- " racter: But I am content to paſs for an " enthuſiaſt, 'till the event convinces you " of the truth of what I ſhall relate.

" If a domeſtick tradition may be credit- " ed, there has no perſon died out of our " family, but what has had a warning of " their approaching fate, by hearing mu- " ſick paſſing thro' the houſe in the dead " ſilence of the night, which is heard by " none but the perſon concerned: My mo- " ther and ſiſter both foretold their own " death from this preſage. I ſee you ſmile, " (*continued* Philocles;) but I have had the " ſame warning, and am ſuperſtitious e- " nough to credit it. Laſt night ſome tri- " fling diſorder kept me waking; my " thoughts, however, were placid and ſe- " rene; ſome verſes, I had heard my ſiſter " repeat in her laſt ſickneſs, came freſh into " my memory:

" *While night in ſolemn triumph reigns,*
" *Aſcend, my ſoul, the heav'nly plains;*

" Thy

"*Thy flight to those gay regions take:*
"*Angels and God are still awake.*
"*The smiling stars will light thy way*
"*To the gladsome realms of day.*
"*While drowsy men with idle themes,*
"*Fantastick joys, and airy dreams,*
"*Are entertain'd; do thou converse*
"*With heav'n, and heav'nly strains rehearse;*
"*Visit the peaceful climes above,*
"*And through the fields of pleasure rove;*
"*Forget the scenes of care and strife,*
"*And walk among the trees of life:*
"*Taste the rich fruits of Paradise,*
"*And bathe in flowing streams of bliss:*
"*Solac'd in those eternal springs,*
"*Lose every thought of mortal things.*"

"Just as I had repeated these verses, I "was serenaded by an invisible musician, "with the sweetest strains that ever delight-"ed mortal ears: The harmonious echo "seemed to pass from room to room, 'till it "came into my chamber; where, after a "short space, it sunk away in a gentle ca-"dence.

"I knew my obsequies were now sung, "and heard the fatal summons without sur-"prize: Death was a theme familiar to my

"thoughts, as I neither expected or desired
"to reach the decline of life."

I listened to this story as to a fairy tale, or a sort of waking dream: As gravely as he told it, I could not forbear laughing.

"This, Madam, (*said he*) is what I ex-
"pected; but it will not make me less serious
"on a subject of such importance. You have
"often rallied me on a manner of life so
"unsuitable to my years; perhaps it may
"be more the effect of reason than inclina-
"tion. My brother's tragical end convinced
"me of the fatal effects of love, and made
"me resolve never to admit that distract-
"ing passion to my breast: But, whatever
"opposition I have made, my heart has
"not been insensible of your charms, nor
"with all my philosophy sufficiently guard-
"ed against the allurements of love and soft
"desire: Even now, when I find myself
"disengaged from every other care, I have
"the utmost solicitude for your happiness;
"I am distressed to leave you in this state
"of infidelity; for this is the last interview
"we shall have, unless I am permitted to
"make you a visit from the immortal re-
"gions.

" gions, in order to convince you, that the
" hopes of Chriſtianity are no deluſion."

" This propoſal (ſaid I) charms me, there
" would be no reſiſting ſuch evidence. I hope
" you will prove a ghoſt of honour, and not
" fail the aſſignation, which on my ſide ſhall
" be punctually kept, on condition you ap-
" pear in open day-light, and dreſſed in your
" celeſtial finery: With theſe circumſtances
" I may venture to promiſe you, neither to
" run away, nor fall into fits. The place of
" your reception (though not perhaps ſuit-
" able to your future dignity) ſhall be a
" painted alcove, fronting a walk ſhaded
" with limes at the end of my brother's gar-
" den."

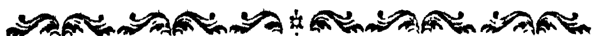
" The gaiety (replied *Philocles*) with
" which you treat this ſubject, perſuades
" me you have courage enough to be as good
" as your word; which is the laſt and only
" favour I have to aſk. I muſt now bid you
" farewell, and in the retirement of my clo-
" ſet prepare to make my exit with a forti-
" tude becoming thoſe ſacred principles, to
" which I have adhered."

Here with a tender confuſion in his looks, he abruptly left the place, and gave me leiſure

tire to reflect on the odd converſation that had paſſed: But as viſionary as ſome part of it appears, I would fain believe the ſoft confeſſion he made is no fiction, for I find myſelf exceſſively in love; but this ſhall be a ſecret to the young enthuſiaſt, 'till he has got over this ſplenetick fit, which, as whimſical as it appears, gives me a ſecret uneaſineſs: He has certainly infected me with ſome religious panicks; I have loſt my taſte for every kind of diverſion; company is moleſting, and ſolitude tireſome; ſelf-reflection diſtracts me; whether I look forward or backward, the proſpect is all confuſion. But I ſhall expoſe myſelf, by owning theſe weakneſſes to one of your character. Adieu, &c.

LAURA.





LETTER VI.

To AURELIA.

OH, my *Aurelia!* I have surprising things to tell you! the lovely *Philocles* is dead; his presages were too certain: About a week after our last interview, I heard the melancholy tidings, that Sir *Harry Lizzard* had lost his only son by a sudden death. The charming youth was impatient of mortality, and is gone to converse with his kindred angels.

You will wonder to hear me treat those subjects seriously, which I have till now ridiculed; it is a change that I myself can hardly credit; I never imagined my inclinations were so tenderly engaged, nor that any kind of adversity could have made such an alteration on my temper.

After the first emotions of grief were over, I recollected the appointment we had made, but rather wished than believed such an interview

te view poſſible; however, my mind was prepared for conviction; I began to reaſon with *Cato*,

"—— *If there's a Pow'r above,*
"*He muſt delight in virtue,*
"*And that which he delights in muſt be happy.*"

I found myſelf now intereſted in the truths of Chriſtianity; the firm belief of a life everlaſting, would in this exigence have been my greateſt conſolation; my hopes and fears prevailed by intervals, and kept me in the moſt tormenting ſuſpenſe, while I waited for the deciſive hour: As ſoon as it came, without any conſternation, I attended at the appointed place.

It was a charming retreat, where art and luxurious nature diſplayed their various beauties; the evening was ſtill, the ſun in golden ſplendour deſcending to the weſtern ſkies, glittered thro' the trees: Every thing looked gay, new life and beauty appeared on all the vernal proſpect; the plants put on a freſher green, the flowers diſplayed a brighter hue, and diffuſed ambroſial fragrancy: Nature ſeemed animated with a conſcious joy, as gladdened at the approach of ſome heavenly Power.

An unuſual alacrity inſpired my thoughts, and ſoothed my ſoul with a ſecret delight; while a ſoft melodious ſound, riſing by juſt degrees, filled the region round with tranſporting harmony.

In the height of theſe agreeable agitations, as the roſy morning breaks from a cloud, the charming *Philocles* ſtood apparent before me: There was ſomething in his aſpect ſo ſerene and beneficent, ſuch a ſweetneſs and affability, that baniſhed every thought of fear, and filled my breaſt with divine tranquillity; ineffable pleaſure ſparkled in his eyes; youth in eternal triumph ſat on his brow, and painted his face with a roſy bloom; his temples were circled with a wreath of celeſtial roſes, which were mingled among his flowing hair, with a ſort of ornamental negligence.

After a ſhort pauſe, he began with a voice that would have allayed the anguiſh of death, and charmed the wildeſt diſcord into calm attention; every accent breathed celeſtial love and harmony, while he deſcribed the bowers of bliſs, the ſoft receſſes and manſions of immortal pleaſure.

But

But it is impoſſible for me to paint the beautiful ideas, or imitate the emphaſis of his language; the powers of eloquence ſat on his tongue, and commanded all the motions of my ſoul, which at that bliſsful period ſeemed enlarged in it's ſuperior faculties; every word was penetrating and ſignificant, his manner perfectly graceful and tranſporting; in his deſcriptions I ſaw the glories, I felt the joys of immortality. But in the midſt of my attention to the ſparkling orator, I could not help obſerving, that he often caſt his eye on the ſhadow of a dial, which was placed on the top of a little marble pedeſtal, on which, with a becoming geſture, he leaned with his right hand. I fancied his time was limited; for, at the laſt glance I ſaw him caſt on the dial, he vaniſhed; and with him all my joys.

This momentary view of celeſtial beauty has obſcured all earthly glory. Never will the Sun diſcloſe a ſcene of pleaſure to my ſight; the vanities which lately amuſed me, have loſt their charms; my thoughts are fixed on ſuperior objects; a divine and immortal ardour inſpires my ſoul, and determines all it's motions: With the evidence I now have of a future exiſtence, my notions of happineſs

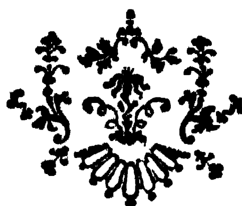
happiness are refined and enlarged, my hopes bright and unlimited.

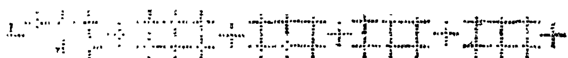
Adieu, my dear *Aurelia!* I am not without hopes, that this relation will have the same effect on your practice, as the heavenly vision has on that of,

MADAM,

Your most humble Servant,

LAURA.





AMORET *to* CORISCA.

FROM the black regions, from the mournful plains,
Where horror in eternal triumph reigns;
From the low caves of Hell, the dens of night,
Far from the frontiers of celeſtial light;
This from the wretched *Amoret* receive,
And at my coſt theſe dreadful truths believe:
That 'tis no fiction pious men adore,
But there's indeed a juſt Almighty Pow'r:
That human ſpirits after death ſurvive,
And to interminable ages live;
That fields of light, and bleſt ethereal plains,
Are no conceits of viſionary brains:
But there are happy bow'rs and ſhades of love,
With pure exhauſtleſs ſprings of joy above;
Immortal crowns the virtuous to reward,
And glorious triumphs for the juſt prepar'd.

Nor queſtion the ſurprizing truths I tell,
While I the ſecrets of the deep reveal:

For Hell is no enthusiastick dream,
No statesman's trick, nor poet's fab'lous
theme.

No pious fraud or mercenary lye
Of subtil priests, to gain the conscience by;
'Tis all too sadly true which they maintain,
And far beyond whate'er the poets feign,
Of streams of liquid fire, and burning lakes,
Infernal gibbets, and eternal racks,
Gorgons, chimeras, furies, and their snakes;
No mortal can a just conception frame,
Nor find for half the terrors here a name.

Then shun the flow'ry paths that down-
ward tend;
To Hell they lead, and in damnation end:
Fly from the snares of that enchanting sin,
Whose fatal joys have my perdition been.

Like thee, with all the pride of beauty
gay,
In loose delights I lately spent the day;
Like thee accomplish'd, and like thee ad-
mir'd,
Mine eyes the savage and polite inspir'd.
Whene'er I spoke, my wit new conquest won,
Thousands came here by my soft airs un-
done.

With

With wild ſuprize my alter'd looks they
view,
And with loud curſes ſtill my flight purſue.
For learn, before too late, licentious fair,
Each face does here an equal horror wear,
And, undiſtinguiſh'd, youth and age appear:
Depriv'd of ev'ry charm, and ev'ry grace,
We all deſcend to this deteſted place.
Illuſtrious *Helen*, once the *Grecian* pride,
In folding ſhades her hated form would
hide;
And conſcious *Thaïs* fears to be deſcry'd.
I ſaw them lately by the trembling gleam,
The pale blue light of inauſpicious flames;
No bluſhes paint their cheeks, their wanton
eyes
No more with Love's contagious darts ſur-
prize.
Raſh *Cleopatra* mourns her haſty doom,
And glides a hideous ſpectre thro' the gloom.
Fam'd *Julia* through the crowd's no longer
known;
Ev'n *Ovid*'s eyes her blaſted charms diſown.

Curs'd be the arts that did my ſoul betray,
And lead my eaſy virtue firſt aſtray:
'Tis paſt—and my repentance comes too late
But thou may'ſt yet avoid this cruel fate.

Perfidiou

Perfidious beauty, quit the roads of vice;
It's ſmooth deſcents to certain death intice.
 Like *Dives*, from th'infernal coaſts I ſend,
To warn my careleſs unbelieving friend:
For thou, while yet a lovely guiltleſs maid,
To ſin, by my example, waſt betray'd;
And ſhould'ſt thou, to theſe mournful regions
 come,
'Twould vaſtly aggravate my heavy doom.

F I N I S.

